Youth Transitions Advisory Council

Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth
Annual Report – October 2012

STATE OF TENNESSEE

TENNESSEE COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Andrew Johnson Tower, Ninth Floor
710 James Robertson Parkway
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 31, 2012
RE: *Youth Transitions Advisory Council 2012 Report*

In accordance with Chapter 415 Public Acts of 2009 now codified as T.C.A. 37-2-601 and included in this report as Appendix A, attached please find the *Youth Transitions Advisory Council 2011 Report*. Effective July 1, 2011, responsibility for this Council and report were transferred to the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth under Chapter 410 of the Public Acts of 2011. The Youth Transitions Advisory Council brings dedicated child advocates together from all across the state who are developing new strategies to meet the challenges of engaging former foster youth as they make the critical transition from adolescence to adulthood.

As we all know from experiences with our own children, siblings, nieces or nephews, and as a growing body of research confirms, the human brain continues to grow and develop well past the age of majority. Indeed brain executive functions of good judgment and maturity are among the last to develop in the mid-twenties. 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. 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.

Too often limited financial resources, job opportunities and housing options reduce the potential of these young adults for completing their education and becoming engaged and productive citizens. Many former foster youth experience homelessness or have encountered the criminal justice system because they lack the strong role models and community connections a stable family can provide. Assistance for youth aging out of state custody can play an important role in achieving the goals Tennessee has set for improving graduation rates, increasing educational attainment, building stronger families and creating safer communities.

The Youth Transitions Advisory Council and the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth express appreciation to the members of the Tennessee General Assembly for the opportunity to improve the lives of these young people, and for appropriating much needed funding to the Department of Children's Services to assist these youth at this critical time in their lives. This report outlines the work of the Youth Transitions Advisory Council in developing strategies to assist these young adults as they prepare for success in the lives ahead of them and contains a number of recommendations for steps that would improve their life prospects. We hope you will find the resources necessary to continue to fund essential services so all Tennessee youth have the opportunity to reach their fullest potential.

Youth Transitions Advisory Council 2012
Table of Contents

Overview and Recommendations……		1
Update on Implementation of Public Chapter 415 (2009)……		10
	Resource Centers……..……	11
	Department of Children's Services Data…….……..	13
Appendix A	Public Chapters 653 (2012) and 415 (2009) and T.C.A. 37-3-116.....	25
Appendix B	7/14/2011 and 9/29/2011 Meeting Agendas and Summaries…….....	35
Appendix C	Resource Center Reports…….....	69
Appendix D	Programs Serving Transitional Youth	83

Youth Transitions Advisory Council

Overview

All children deserve the opportunity to become successful, productive adults. Children must be safe, healthy, educated, nurtured, supported and engaged to prepare them to make a successful transition into adulthood. With more than 230,000 young people aging out of foster care nationally, it is critical they receive services and supports to help make a successful transition without the traditional family or community supports. Unfortunately, youth aging out of state custody often do not have these supports in place, making the transition from state custody into adulthood incredibly challenging, resulting in increased risk for negative outcomes.

Research indicates providing supports and services until age 21 leads to better outcomes for youth. Remaining in care after turning 18 more than doubles the chance a youth will be working or in school at age 19. Young women who remained in care saw a 38 percent reduction in pregnancy before age 20. Research also clearly shows the adverse outcomes for the youth who are not able to access services beyond age 18. Youth transitioning from foster care suffer significantly higher rates of incarceration, homelessness, school dropout, unemployment, unwanted pregnancy, and lack of access to health care. Studies show more than one in five youth will become homeless after age 18 and one in four will be incarcerated within two years of leaving the system.

With this grim outlook for the youth aging out of state custody, policy makers must make it a priority to improve the opportunities for young people to succeed and transition into adulthood successfully, including extending foster care services beyond age 18. The Tennessee Youth Transitions Advisory Council (YTAC) works to identify quality, effective services and supports, as well as opportunities for improvement by addressing the barriers and gaps these young people experience.

Youth Transitions Advisory Council Recommendations

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 to 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, mental health and substance abuse treatment needs to the adult service delivery systems.

Recommendations in the 2011 Youth Transitions Advisory Council Report focused on the critical importance of reauthorizing and continuing funding for Fostering Connections. YTAC greatly appreciates the commitment of Governor Haslam and the Tennessee General Assembly for implementing this recommendation. Special thanks is due to Jimmy Wayne and Tawny Spinelli who provided persuasive testimony to legislative committees regarding the importance of passage and funding of the legislation.

Discussions at Youth Transitions Advisory Council meetings on May 31, August 28 and October 9, 2012 resulted in the identification of a broader range of needs to help youth who are transitioning to adulthood have access to education, infrastructure services and supports, legal assistance and other needs that facilitate their success. Those discussions produced the following recommendations that were reviewed and approved for inclusion in this report at the meeting on October 9, 2012.

Recommendation Regarding Essential Documentation

- **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. Strategies for securing the documents include having a mentor or other trusted advisor keep a copy or keeping a copy on a password protected flash drive or "*Drop Box*" website. 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. There should be consideration of adding a credit check for youth before they are 18 or a credit report for those age 18-plus. This is suggested because foster youth in some states have experienced identity theft. Request for such a report would both discourage identity theft and determine if it has happened so the youth's record could be cleared. A copy of the list is included as an Appendix in this document.

Recommendations to Address Educational Issues:

- 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 to acquire credits for graduation**. Transportation to the previous school system or other educational options should be provided by the Department of Children's Services.

- **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 to local 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 of 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 specialized 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.

- **The Department of Children's Services should implement additional strategies to enhance credit acquisition/recovery during the time children are placed in youth development centers.** DCS is lauded for changing the educational program within its youth development centers to a semester system to optimize opportunities for youth to maintain/acquire credits.

- **The Department of Children's Services should advocate for additional strategies to enhance credit acquisition and recovery for children in foster care.** DCS Education Specialists should advocate in public schools, YDCs and contract provider schools for students to participate in credit recovery programs, summer school and other accelerated credit options that might be available.

Recommendations Related to Higher Education

- **As outlined in policy, 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.** 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.

- **All state-funded colleges and universities should keep residence halls open during holidays or provide other housing opportunities for housing for foster youth/former foster youth during this time.** Several private universities in Tennessee already provide this opportunity for former foster youth.

- **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.

- 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.

Recommendations for Services and Supports:

- **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. Special assistance is needed for transitional youth with certain severe mental health diagnoses and developmental delays.

- **Funding for resource centers for transitioning youth should be continued and expanded.** 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 Knoxville, Nashville and Memphis 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, ensuring all their needs are met. Resource Centers are needed in other areas in Tennessee as well. In the absence of resource centers, other state funding or resources are needed to provide core supports and services.

- **Funding for Youth Villages' transitional living program should be continued and expanded.** 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 4,737 youth across the state of Tennessee. Currently, the program is serving more than 450 former foster youth with a success rate of 86 percent. While the Transitional Living program is serving a substantial number of youth, there are still young people aging out of care (approximately 800 youth each year) who are not eligible for services under Fostering Connections and need assistance through the Transitional Living program. Youth Villages' commitment to the aging-out population is reflected in their commitment to contribute $12 million in a matching grant ($3 million per year for the next four years) to support youth aging out of Tennessee's foster care system if the State of Tennessee will match this level of support. At a minimum, the state should continue funding this program to help ensure youth aging out of care are given appropriate opportunities to reach their fullest potential.

- **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 "Recommendations Related to Higher Education" and the provision of one-stop-shop resource centers discussed above to facilitate access to the broader range of needed services would both help address transportation barriers. Other creative strategies should also be identified and implemented.

- **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 18 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.

- **The Department of Children's Services has made great strides to facilitate continuing TennCare eligibility for all foster youth who transition from state custody to adulthood, and these efforts should continue .** The Department of

Children's Services has developed an arrangement with TennCare to permit application for TennCare services 30 days prior to the youth's 18th birthday to ensure continuity of health care coverage. 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.

- **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 as 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.

- **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.

- **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.

Recommendations Related to Legal System Issues:

- **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.

- **There is a need to increase the availability of specialized 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 specialized 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.

- **Peer advocates are important resources working with current and former foster youth and specialized foster care review boards and should be continued and their availability expanded.** Peer advocates help youth feel comfortable and supported in the foster care review process. 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 ways to adequately support peer advocates.

- **Foster youth should get a photo id by age 16 and the Tennessee Department of Safety should provide a *free* photo id for all youth in foster care regardless of their age. Foster youth should also 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 when they are eligible to vote.

- **Juvenile Court Judges should be encouraged to appoint CASA volunteers for older adolescents, and even for young adults 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 connection to a caring adult.

- **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 transition hearings occur and that 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.

- **The Administrative Office of the Courts Court Improvement Program should recommend introduction of legislation to change references in the statutes from "post custody" to "extended foster care" or "extension of foster care services," depending on the context.** In response to Federal Fostering Connections legislation, terminology for services for children who have transitioned out of foster care at legal adulthood has changed. State law should be amended to be consistent with federal language.

- **The Administrative Office of the Courts Court Improvement Program should recommend introduction of legislation that requires all youth in foster care be permitted to graduate from high school if they have completed the minimum number of high school credits for graduation specified by state law.** Current state law requires 22 credits to graduate, but some counties in Tennessee require more than the minimum number of credits for graduation. While this may be laudable in terms of preparation for college, children in foster care should not be penalized because they sometimes experience placement in multiple school systems with different numbers of credit requirements. As a special "local education agency (LEA)," the Department of Children's Services ensures the youth development centers and provider agencies' in-house schools comply with statutory minimum credit requirements. State law should require all school systems to allow graduation for children in foster care who have completed the statutorily specified number of credits.

- **The Administrative Office of the Courts Court Improvement Program should recommend introduction of legislation that requires all school records of children in state custody be forwarded to the receiving school regardless of whether they have unpaid/outstanding school fines.** Children enter state custody because they have experienced abuse or neglect or because of their behavior problems. In the overwhelming majority of cases, they are from relatively dysfunctional families. One of the manifestations of the adverse family experiences for many children in foster care may be the failure to pay school fines. Children in state custody should not be further disadvantaged by the withholding of their school records because of fines. Their educational experiences have often been compromised, and they should not experience

additional delays in receiving needed educational services because of issues related to unpaid/outstanding fines.

Recommendations Related to Training

- **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 and educational, legal and other services and supports that help young adults navigate the many barriers they face. 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; and
    - Mentors for current/former foster youth.

- **Juvenile court judges need 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**.

Implementation of the 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. It is incumbent on the State of Tennessee, as the legal parent for young people who have been in state custody, to provide the resources necessary for them to successfully transition to adulthood.

Update on Implementation of Public Chapter 415 (2009)

In May 2011, the Tennessee General Assembly adopted Public Chapter 410 abolishing legislative oversight committees, including the Select Committee on Children and Youth (SCCY). The legislation transferred responsibility for coordinating the Youth Transitions Advisory Council (YTAC) created by Public Chapter 415 in 2009 and codified at T.C.A. 37-2-601 to the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth (TCCY). The purpose of the council is to track the effectiveness of services provided to youth in state custody as they transition from care into adulthood and to develop strategies for maintaining adequate data and information to help inform policy decisions.

YTAC has met four times since submitting its last report in October 2011, in February, May, August and October of 2012. Meeting agendas and summaries are available in Appendix B. The primary topic of every meeting of the Youth Transitions Advisory Council is an update from the Department of Children's Services on the successful implementation of Extension of Foster Care Services and presentations from the three resource centers. Meetings often also include special presentations regarding services for youth transitioning to adulthood. The Council has also greatly benefitted from the attendance and participation of transitioning youth who have received extended foster care services and shared their experiences with the group. YTAC members travel from across the state, without the benefit of state reimbursement or meals, to improve the lives of these young adults and their communities.

The year brought two important milestones for Extended Foster Care Services. The first was enactment of Public Chapter 653, repealing the sunset for the Tennessee Transitioning Youth Empowerment Act. This legislation was initiated by Governor Haslam and sponsored by the Majority Leaders of the Senate and the House of Representatives, Senator Mark Norris and Representative Gerald McCormick. Senator Doug Overbey and Representative Mark White were co-sponsors of the legislation enlisted to carry the bills before Committees and on the Floor. The members had some special assistance gaining support for the legislation coming from chart-topping Country Music singer-songwriter Jimmy Wayne. Jimmy came to the General Assembly and testified in front of Committees in both the House and Senate about his childhood in an unstable family and the plight of youth aging out of foster care without support. Jimmy walked from Nashville to Phoenix to raise awareness about children in foster care and those leaving foster care and transitioning to adulthood without the benefits of a strong family. Today he has established Project Meet Me Halfway to assist young people in their transition from foster care. He even attended the YTAC meeting in May and sent tweets to his followers.

Senator Overbey and Representative White were each honored by Tennessee Court Appointed Special Advocates (TN CASA) in 2012 as Legislators of the Year. Jimmy Wayne was recognized as TN CASA Child Advocate of the Year for his efforts in supporting youth transitioning from foster care to adulthood.

The second important milestone reached this year concerned the funding for the program. In 2010, when the program was first created the state was experiencing a severe revenue shortfall due to the ongoing effects of unemployment brought about by the Great Recession. Legislators

funded Extension of Foster Care services and many other significant programs for two fiscal years with non-recurring revenue from the Core Services Reserve. These were funds set aside from the Revenue Fluctuation account (Rainy Day Fund) to fund these programs in FY 2011 and FY 2012. In the Administration Budget proposal for FY 2013, Governor Haslam recommended funding the program with recurring dollars, meaning it would be placed in the base budget and allowing it to be funded on an ongoing basis each year unless identified for elimination. This is a significant action since in most budget years under normal economic circumstances, only "improvements to the budget" requiring additional funding receive a great deal of scrutiny.

Resource Centers

Tennessee DCS works in partnership with the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative to support a statewide network of resource centers to support transitioning foster youth. The resource centers implement the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative and bring together people and resources to help youth make the connections they need for permanence, education, employment, housing, health care and supportive personal and community relationships. The core strategies and objectives of the Initiative are:

1) Youth Engagement: to prepare young people to be meaningfully involved as decision-makers and self-advocates;
2) Partnerships and Resources: to access the resources of public and private systems and philanthropic organizations, expand and deepen community support, and cultivate community champions for young people transitioning from foster care;
3) Research, Evaluation and Communications: to involve key stakeholders in using data to drive decision making and communications, and in documenting results;
4) Public Will and Policy: to advance policy and practice that improve outcomes for young people transitioning from foster care; and
5) Increased Opportunities: to create an array of opportunities and help young people gain access to them.

In 2002, the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative funded a multi-year grant to support the implementation of the initiative in Middle Tennessee. In 2011, the initiative expanded to West and East Tennessee. Currently three resource centers serve transitioning foster youth across the state:

- South Memphis Alliance: Dream Seekers Initiative
- Monroe Harding, Nashville: Youth Connections
- Child and Family Tennessee (Knoxville): Project NOW

These three resource centers provide educational training, resource coordination, financial literacy training and implementation of the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative to transitioning youth up to age 24.

The resource centers offer young people the Opportunity Passport™, the primary component of which is an Individual Development Account (IDA) or a matched savings account. A matched savings account can help young people aging out of foster care learn financial management, obtain experience with the mainstream banking system, and save money for assets, putting them

on a path towards being a productive, successful adult. Each resource center will enroll a minimum of 40 youth per year in the Opportunity Passport™. Outcomes are tracked through the Opportunity Passport Participant Survey and the Management Information System for Individual Development Accounts (MIS-IDA).

The South Memphis Alliance Dream Seekers Initiative has graduated 62 youth, many of whom are continuing to participate in youth leadership board meetings and other activities. The program is actively working to address their challenges of consistent youth engagement. South Memphis Alliance continues to increase community partnerships that enhance the resources available to help youth successfully graduate from their program. SMA's community partners include; Tennessee Department of Children's Services; Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative; Shelby County Office of Early Childhood and Youth; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; First Tennessee Bank; Black Rose Foundation for Children; Memphis CARES; JustCare Family Network; The Women's Foundation; The Assisi Foundation; and Memphis/Shelby County Government. SMA received an incentive award from the Department of Labor and Workforce Development to provide services to youth targeting two specific zip codes in Shelby County.

Established almost seven years ago, Monroe Harding's Youth Connections located in Nashville was the first resource center in Tennessee. It provides both residential and non-residential programming. Over 74 young people have obtained their GED after participating in the GED classes and 80 percent of participants in the Stepping Stones program find employment. Youth Connections has established community partnerships with Essex Bargain Hunt Stores, Macy's, and The Shop Barber and Hair Salon to assist program participants in finding employment and vocational training. Other community partners are Nashville Career Advancement Center and US Bank.

The newest resource center at Child and Family Tennessee in Knoxville continues working with youth in the East Tennessee, Knox and Smoky Mountain region. The Project NOW program enrolled 18 new youth, had 45 youth complete financial literacy classes and 40 open IDA accounts during the current year. Project Now is developing more community partnerships in the Knoxville area. Their newest partners include YMCA Knoxville, Tenants Choice Property Management, Knox Auto Parts, Tennessee School of Beauty, and Smoky Mountain Financial, among others.

2012 YTAC Data Request From DCS

The legislation establishing the Youth Transitions Advisory Council (TCA 37-2-601) identifies data that the Department of Children's Services should provide annually. The specific data questions and the responses provided by the Department of Children's Services are presented below and on the following pages.

1. **Strategies to access and track effectiveness of post-custody services and the operation of the resource centers**

The Department of Children's Services is committed to data-driven decision making. Key goals for the office of Independent Living were developed and adopted by regional DCS staff as part of the Department's "S.M.A.R.T. Goals" implementation. Specific items to be measured in the upcoming fiscal year include timely completion of Life skills assessments and transitional surveys, completion of monthly face-to-face contact with young adults and ongoing identification of uptake rate for Extension of Foster Care Services. Specific efforts are underway to identify data on pregnant and parenting foster youth as well as the numbers of youth who achieve their educational goals. The Performance Accountability Review (PAR) Unit updated the review tool used to evaluate private providers to better evaluate whether independent living and transition goals from the youth's permanency plan are incorporated into the youth's individual treatment plan.

In addition to these data collection efforts, the Department of Children's Services is focused on continually improving the quality of independent living and transition planning with young people and has disseminated tools to assist staff with this. Three new guides for creating Independent Living (IL) and Transition plans were developed, and an in person and online training on creating quality plans has been delivered to DCS staff. A new file review tool focused specifically on the quality of IL and transition plans was developed and is being implemented as part of a statewide IL file review process that is currently underway. This data will allow DCS to identify key strengths and opportunities related to Independent Living, and to develop specific regional and team-level plans to enhance the provision of Independent Living planning and services.

2. **Strategies for maintaining accurate numbers of young adults served by post-custody services;**

In addition to using TFACTS data, Independent Living Program Specialists maintain data that demonstrates overall provision of post custody services via a monthly report that is 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 is derived from TFACTS system records.

3. **The number of services provided by the Department of Children's Services;**

Services Available to Youth in State Custody
and Those Who Received Post Custody Services

1	Post Secondary Application Fees
2	Testing Fees (SAT, ACT, GED)
3	Tutoring
4	Summer School
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	State Funded Scholarship
28	Youth Villages Transitional Living
29	Monroe Harding Independent Living
30	Opportunity Passport™ (per the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative) - Provided Via the Resource Centers
31	Placement Services
32	Case Management

4. **The number of young adults who received these services during Fiscal Year 2011-12;**
DCS provides youth aging out of state custody services through multiple sources based on their eligibility. Services provided by DCS as well as through DCS contracts with private providers and community agencies include the following.

- Transitional Living: 576
- Resource Centers: 107 new youth enrolled
- DCS Voluntary Post-Custody Services: 439
- Scholarship Only: 190

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

5. Reasons why children do not accept these services;

The Youth Transitions Advisory Council implemented a survey with foster care alumni in 2010-2011 to help identify the reasons why young adults do not accept post-custody services. The main reason identfied was that youth simply do not want to continue services with DCS when they become an adult. The reason with the second highest number of responses was that youth were not aware of the services. These survey results indicate there is a need for education and outreach to inform youth about available services and to erase the stigma of remaining in the system. Information from this survey was used to facilitate ongoing conversations with the regional Youth 4 Youth leadership boards to continue to explore ways to better engage youth in conversations about acceptance of these services and develop a flyer for young people about Extension of Foster Care Services.

One specific group identified as less likely to accept post-custody services is young people who are adjudicated delinquent. Of the total youth who aged out eligible for Post Custody Services during FY 2012, only seven percent of eligible juvenile justice youth accepted post-custody services, compared to 40 percent of dependent/neglected youth. Meetings were held with regional juvenile justice staff to discuss the barriers to serving juvenile justice youth, and input from the youth was gathered by regional staff. There were three issues identified among youth from the juvenile justice system: 1) They were more likely to view custody as punitive and therefore less likely to want voluntary services; 2) Unlike many dependent/neglected youth, many of these young people had families to return to as adults and 3) Some "myths" around eligibility for youth who are in the juvenile justice system continue to exist among staff. To address this, specific training was delivered to juvenile justice and youth development center staff. Per their request, handouts specific to the eligibilty of juvenile justice youth were developed and disseminated. Independent Living staff continues ongoing training and planning with DCS Juvenile Justice staff.

6. The number of children who exited state custody who received scholarship assistance from DCS to continue into post secondary educational programs during FY 2011-12:

410: (ETV: 297, State Scholarship: 113)
Source: Independent Living Scholarship Report

7. **Number of children in state custody during FY 2011-12;**

Total Population

Region	Total In Custody	Under 13	13 & Over
Davidson	1,027	385	642
East Tennessee	998	613	385
Hamilton	592	261	331
Knox	1,144	809	335
Mid Cumberland	1,603	782	821
Northeast	1,275	785	490
Northwest	492	216	276
Shelby	2,017	863	1,154
Smoky Mountain	1,468	905	563
South Central	946	419	527
Southeast	796	428	368
Southwest	652	312	340
Upper Cumberland	1,195	697	498
Statewide	14,205	7,475	6,730

Source: Tennessee Department of Children's Services – TFACTS

Males 13 & Over

	Adjudication			Race				
Males 13 & Over	JJ	D/N	Unruly	White	Black	Multiracial	Other	Unknown / Missing
459	301	153	5	116	266	21	7	49
244	90	152	2	209	13	3	2	17
223	146	72	5	57	142	4	0	20
185	39	146	0	98	67	15	0	5
506	292	183	31	299	103	25	2	77
293	142	132	19	241	14	12	0	26
170	104	59	7	93	57	10	0	10
801	544	257	0	42	691	16	1	51
325	117	198	10	261	17	13	0	34
309	189	105	15	229	47	21	1	11
212	109	91	12	180	17	6	1	8
222	151	64	7	80	127	10	0	5
278	135	122	21	244	8	11	0	15
4,227	2,359	1,734	134	2,149	1,569	167	14	328

Source: Tennessee Department of Children's Services – TFACTS

Females 13 & Over

	Adjudication			Race				
Females 13 & Over	JJ	D/N	Unruly	White	Black	Multiracial	Other	Unknown / Missing
183	32	150	1	62	91	10	4	16
141	14	127	0	120	3	2	3	13
108	26	79	3	49	42	7	2	8
150	2	146	2	101	42	2	2	3
315	81	196	38	199	43	17	1	55
197	47	131	19	158	9	8	0	22
106	21	79	6	72	23	1	0	10
353	47	306	0	18	293	13	0	29
238	28	209	1	202	7	10	3	16
218	48	156	14	184	21	9	1	3
156	37	109	10	127	14	7	1	7
118	15	97	6	58	46	8	0	6
220	48	149	23	187	6	6	1	20
2,503	**446**	**1,934**	**123**	**1,537**	**640**	**100**	**18**	**208**

Source: Tennessee Department of Children's Services – TFACTS

8. **Number of post custody youth served FY 2011-2012 broken down by adjudication, gender, race/ethnicity, region/county;**

Total Served: 439

Adjudication:
Dependent/Neglected: 380
Unruly: 8
Delinquent: 48
Exited Custody via Interstate Compact: 3

Gender: Female: 260, Male: 179

Race/Ethnicity:
Asian: 1
Black/African American: 165
Hispanic: 4
Multiracial: 9
White: 259
Unable to Determine: 1

By Region:

Northwest	17
Southwest	29
Shelby	78
Davidson	30
Mid Cumberland	33
South Central	32
Upper Cumberland	40
Northeast	29
East	26
Smoky Mountain	44
Tennessee Valley	49
Knox	32

By County:

Anderson	5
Bedford	4
Benton	1
Blount	13
Bradley	8
Campbell	4
Cannon	1
Cheatham	2
Chester	1
Claiborne	5
Clay	1
Cocke	2
Coffee	2
Cumberland	7
Davidson	29
Dekalb	4
Dickson	2
Fayette	2
Fentress	3
Franklin	3
Gibson	6
Giles	3
Grainger	2
Greene	7
Hamblen	4
Hamilton	29
Hardeman	2
Hawkins	1
Haywood	1
Henderson	2
Henry	6
Hickman	1
Humphreys	1
Jackson	4
Jefferson	6
Johnson	1
Knox	31
Lake	1
Lauderdale	3
Lawrence	9

Lincoln	2
Loudon	2
Macon	4
Madison	7
Marion	1
Marshall	2
Maury	3
McMinn	4
McNairy	2
Meigs	2
Monroe	3
Montgomery	7
Morgan	2
Obion	1
Overton	1
Polk	1
Putnam	6
Rhea	2
Roane	2
Robertson	3
Rutherford	7
Scott	5
Sevier	10
Shelby	78
Smith	3
State of NJ	1
State of WI	2
Sullivan	9
Sumner	3
Tipton	6
Trousdale	1
Unicoi	1
Union	4
Warren	4
Washington	9
Wayne	5
Weakely	4
White	1
Williamson	4
Wilson	6

Source: Independent Living Monthly Report

9. The following describes the number of youth who received independent living wraparound services FYE 2012. This is reported from TFACTS.

Description	# of Youth
Auto Insurance	56
Child Care Help	11
Drivers Education	64
Drivers Test Fee	64
Extra-Curricular Leadership Activity/Membership Fees	210
Good Grade Incentive	210
Graduation Package	211
Honor/Senior Trip	210
Household Furnishings	11
Housing Application Fee	188
IL Class Stipend	210
Job Training Readiness	182
Job Training Start up Cost	182
Material for Vocational Studies	210
Non-Recurring Housing Start Cost	11
Other Special Needs	29
Post Secondary Applications	211
Senior Event Transportation	210
Summer School	210
Testing Fees	211
Tools for Vocational Studies	37
Transportation Grant	56
Tutoring	210
Vehicle Repair	56
Yearbooks	211
Youth Leadership Stipend	29

Source: Tennessee Department of Children's Services – TFACTS

10. Number of youth who decline continuation of foster care services and the reasons given for declining the services.

During FY 2012, 27 percent of the total eligible aged-out population of youth accepted voluntary post custody services; 40 percent of dependent/neglected youth, 15 percent of Unruly youth and seven percent of eligible juvenile justice youth accepted voluntary post-custody services. The total eligible uptake rate for FY 2012 represents a 30 percent increase in the number of youth accepting voluntary extension of foster care services as compared to the rate of 20 percent for FY 2011.
Source: Tennessee Department of Children's Services – TFACTS and Independent Living Monthly Report

For information on the reasons for declining voluntary services, please see the response to question 5.

11. Number of young adults receiving DCS Voluntary Post Custody Services who were in foster care placement, supervised independent living arrangements and other placement arrangements.

- 210 youth in Foster Care Placements at some point during FY 2011-12;
- 217 youth received the Independent Living Allowance during FY 2011-12;
- 8 youth received housing services through the Monroe Harding Grant.

Source: Tennessee Department of Children's Services – Independent Living Monthly Report, Monroe Harding Children's Home Grantee Report

<u>Department of Children's Services Efforts During the Past Year</u>

The Department of Children's Services has focused heavily on implementation of the Rederal Fostering Connections Act and Tennessee's Transitioning Youth Empowerment Act. The Department of Children's Services is providing Extension of Foster Care Services to the following populations under this act:

1. <u>Young adults up to age 21 completing high school or GED</u>. Past practice extended foster care services up to age 20. Extending the age to 21 provides additional opportunities for youth to complete secondary education.
2. <u>Young adults up to age 21 who are enrolled in an institution which provides post-secondary or vocational education.</u> Past policy and practice provided services to this population under Chaffee. Expanding this option under Fostering Connections allows young adults to remain in their current placement or move into a supervised living setting over the summer or other short break and utilize IV-E funds to support this placement. This continuity of care will provide young adults additional stability and opportunities to prepare to enter post-secondary educational programs.
3. <u>Young adults up to age 21 who have a medical condition that prevents them from pursuing post-secondary education or full-time employment.</u> For those that qualify and accept services, this will provide a "bridge" of time to secure Supplemental Security

Income (SSI) and other adult support services for individuals with special needs, continue to work on independent living skills and implement the young person's transition plan.

Implementation of this Act required a full update to Independent Living (IL) and related policy, manual, handouts and online materials. The state's plan was approved and implementation of the new policies began in July 2012.

A major initiative that took place in 2011-2012 was around staff training. During the reporting period, the Department of Children's Services implemented a statewide training initiative focused on improving the quality of Independent Living and Transition Planning and implementation of new policy. Nearly 3,000 DCS staff were trained in person in "IL Back to Basics," which focused on the development of quality IL and Transition plans and "New Policy Training: 18 is not a magic number," which trained staff on new polices around extension of foster care services to 21. This training is also available online. One-pagers and handouts that clearly outline eligibility and available services were developed and disseminated. Additionally, the IL section of the DCS website was updated to include this new information and online trainings. To follow up on the success of this training, a new IL file review tool was developed and is being implemented statewide as part of an IL file review process. Information from the file reviews will allow DCS to identify statewide and regional strengths and opportunities, and to develop specific statewide, regional and team-level plans to enhance the provision of Independent Living planning and services. Key partners such as foster parents, private provider agencies, CASAs and others were also provided these materials and training.

The Department of Children's Services coordinated Youth Leadership Academies and Youth 4 Youth Board meetings in collaboration with community based partners. These meetings took place in West, Middle and East Tennessee, with over 50 youth participating. IL Leadership has conducted focus groups with youth leaders to identify strategies to better engage youth in care.

The Department of Children's Services is implementing two grants to improve services to pregnant and parenting youth in foster care. One grant, the Federal Personal Responsibility Education Program, has been used to implement the evidence based pregnancy prevention Teen Outreach Program® in selected congregate care settings and the initial results are promising. The Center for the Study of Social Policy awarded Tennessee a grant to target the unique needs of pregnant and parenting youth in foster care in Knox County.

Opportunities:

One of the biggest challenges for the Department of Children's Services is around transitioning those youth with serious special needs. New policy provides an opportunity to continue services to these youth and bridge them to appropriate adult services during a critical time period. While this option is available, it is voluntary, and many young people who are most in need of the services do not wish to accept voluntary services. Additionally, 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 intellectual disablilites or certain mental health diagnoses. DCS is implementing a centralized review and monitoring process for these young adults and is strengthening partnerships with key agencies through entities such as

the Youth Transition Advisory Council. Improving the transition of youth with serious special needs will take ongoing collaboration between multiple state agencies and community based partners.

Other accomplishments

- DCS collaborated with TennCare and the Tennessee Department of Human Services to allow foster youth who are aging out of foster care to reapply for TennCare 30 days prior to the youth turning 18, so that there is no lapse in coverage. Additionally, new protocols are in place to assure that qualified youth in Extension of Foster Care Services maintain their TennCare eligibility.
- DCS has continued to fund a grant with Youth Villages, providing Transitional Living Services to eligible youth and young adults. This program provides assistance to young adults transitioning from state custody and to support permanence for eligible youth who exited from state custody as teenagers. The Transitional Living program provides case management services and focuses on the identification of housing resources, employment/employability, educational attainment, life skills preparation and the enhancement of permanent adult connections.
- DCS has continued a grant-based program with Monroe Harding Children's Home to support an on-site housing program for aged-out youth.
- The one-stop shop model begun in collaboration with Nashville's Monroe Harding to provide educational training, resource coordination, financial literacy training and implementation of the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative and Opportunity Passport™, was expanded to two sites in Memphis and Knoxville. All three sites are in full operation with funding from DCS, and enrolled 107 new youth during this fiscal year.
- DCS continued distribution of the state funded scholarship program established by the Governor's Office to bridge the gap for former foster youth and young adults who may not be eligible for education and training vouchers, and 113 youth received this scholarship.
- DCS partnered with Connected TN to develop a program entitled Computers for Kids, which is designed to provide donations of laptop computers. This opportunity is being provided throughout the state, targeting youth in state custody and youth who age out of foster care, and 694 laptops were distributed to foster youth statewide.

Appendix A

Public Chapter 653 (2012)
Public Chapter 415 (2009) and
T.C.A. 37-3-116

State of Tennessee
PUBLIC CHAPTER NO. 653

HOUSE BILL NO. 2337

By Representatives McCormick, White, Jones, Dean, Ford, Ryan Williams, Faison, Maggart, Weaver, Hardaway, Hensley, Johnnie Turner, Rich, Montgomery, Marsh, Parkinson, Elam, Dunn, Favors, Brown, Lollar, Richardson, Towns, Shaw, Cooper

Substituted for: Senate Bill No. 2199

By Senators Norris, Overbey, Burks, Ford, Harper, Marrero, Massey, Tracy, Watson

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 37-2-417 and Chapter 1065 of the Public Acts of 2010, relative to Tennessee's Transitioning Youth Empowerment Act of 2010.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Chapter 1065, Section 5, of the Public Acts of 2010, is amended by deleting the language "and shall be repealed on June 30, 2012. The repeal of this act shall not affect any programs that provide services to youth who are transitioning to adulthood from state custody and that are administered by the department of children's services prior to the effective date of this act."

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming law, the public welfare requiring it.

HOUSE BILL NO. 2337

PASSED: MARCH 19, 2012

BETH HARWELL, SPEAKER
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

RON RAMSEY
SPEAKER OF THE SENATE

APPROVED this 4th day of April 2012

BILL HASLAM, GOVERNOR

STATE OF TENNESSEE

PUBLIC CHAPTER NO. 415

HOUSE BILL NO. 686

By Representatives Richardson, Sherry Jones, Hardaway

Substituted for: Senate Bill No. 638

By Senators Marrero, Harper, Ford

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 37, relative to children 18 years of age and older who are aging out of custody of the department of children's services.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 37, Chapter 2, is amended by adding the following as a new part:

37-2-501.

(a) The executive director of the select committee on children and youth shall establish a non-funded, voluntary, post-custody services advisory council, which shall be responsible for:

(1) Identifying strategies to assess and track effectiveness of post-custody services and the operation of resources centers authorized by this part;

(2) Identifying the following:

(A) strategies for maintaining accurate numbers of children served by post-custody services,

(B) the number of services provided by the department of children's services,

(C) the number of children who accept these services,

(D) reasons why children do not accept such services, and

(E) the number of children that continue their education and the number that do not; and

(3) The advisory council shall report no later than October 31st of each year to the select committee on children and youth,

house children and family affairs committee, house health and human resources committee and senate general welfare, health and human resources committee, making recommendations for the continuing operation of the system of post-custody services and supports;

(b) The department of children's services and other state agencies which 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.

37-2-502.

(a) All state agencies which administer cash or in-kind assistance, or both, to youth age eighteen (18) to twenty-four (24), within the course of normal business, shall make reasonable effort 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 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, websites, emails, verbal notifications, and or other printed material.

37-2-503.

(a) The private, non-profit 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, mental health care; and

(4) Navigate systems and procedures that impact the person's education, employment, health and mental welfare, and basic needs.

(c) Such 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 post-custody 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 .

37-2-504.

In preparing a foster child for independent living prior to the child reaching eighteen (18) years or 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.

37-2-505.

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.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming law, the public welfare requiring it.

PASSED: June 3, 2009

KENT WILLIAMS, SPEAKER
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

RON RAMSEY
SPEAKER OF THE SENATE

APPROVED this 11th day of June 2009

PHIL BREDESEN, GOVERNOR

37-2-417. Tennessee's Transitioning Youth Empowerment Act of 2010. - [Effective until June 30, 2012. See the Compiler's Notes.]

(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 vocational 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.

[Acts 2010, ch. 1065, §§ 1-3.]

Compiler's Notes. Acts 2010, ch. 1065, § 5 provided that the act, which enacted this section, shall be repealed June 30, 2012. The repeal of the act shall not affect any programs that provide services to youth who are transitioning to adulthood from state custody and that are administered by the department of children's services prior to July 1, 2010.

Appendix B

Meeting Agendas and Summaries

STATE OF TENNESSEE
TENNESSEE COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH
Andrew Johnson Tower, Ninth Floor
710 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0800
(615) 741-2633 (FAX) 741-5956
1-800-264-0904

Youth Transitions Advisory Council

February, 9, 2012
1:00 pm – 4:00 pm
Goodwill Industries of Middle Tennessee
937 Herman Street, Nashville, TN 37208

Welcome/Introductions/Acceptance of September Meeting Summary – *Linda O'Neal*

Governor's Budget and "Youth Empowerment Act of 2010" Legislation – *Linda O'Neal*

Office of Independent Living Update –
Dave Aguzzi and Kim Crane Mallory, Department of Children's Services

Update from Resource Centers –
Karen Morgan, South Memphis Alliance
Teresa Moore, Youth Connections at Monroe Harding
Shantel Standefer, Child & Family Tennessee

October 2011 Report to Legislature (http://www.tn.gov/tccy/yt-ar-11.pdf **) –** *Sumita Banerjee*

Update from the Administrative Office of the Courts – *Nyasha Justice*

Future Meetings

Other Business

STATE OF TENNESSEE
TENNESSEE COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Andrew Johnson Tower, Ninth Floor
710 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0800
(615) 741-2633 (FAX) 741-5956
1-800-264-0904

YOUTH TRANSITIONS ADVISORY COUNCIL
MEETING SUMMARY

Goodwill Industries of Middle Tennessee
937 Herman Street, Nashville, TN 37208
February 9, 2012
1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Participants:

Linda O'Neal, Chair	Cheryl Hultman	Kay Overbey
Dave Aguzzi	Mary T. Jones	Jonathan Peak
Sumita Banerjee	Nyasha Justice	Steve Petty
Erik Batts	Leslie Kinkaid	Lee Ragsdale
Julia Barlar	Mary Lee	Aneja Raiteri
Pam Brown	Kim Crane Mallory	John Rust
Alicia Cone	James Martin	Toni Shaw
Kym Gethers	Christy Montgomery	Shantel Standefer
Joe Goldsmith	Teresa Moore	Christine Telford
Genesis Hardin	Karen L. Morgan	Mark Wolf
Kimberly Holst	Michael Myszka	

Welcome and Introductions– *Linda O'Neal*

- O'Neal welcomed the group and asked everyone to introduce him/herself.

I. Acceptance of September Meeting Summary – *Linda O'Neal*

- O'Neal asked members to review the September Meeting Summary and asked for revisions or edits.
- **IT WAS MOVED (KINKAID) AND SECONDED (RAGSDALE) TO ACCEPT THE SEPTEMBER 2011 MINUTES. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

II. Governor's Budget and "Youth Empowerment Act of 2010" Legislation – *Linda O'Neal*

- O'Neal reviewed SB 2199(Norris)/HB 2337 (McCormick), the Administration's bill deleting the original repeal date of June 30, 2012 for the Youth Empowerment Act.
- O'Neal invited Mallory to provide additional details since she was present and testified at the House Children and Family Affairs Meeting. Country Music Star Jimmy Wayne and TCCY Commission

Member Tawny Spinelli testified in the House Committee and shared information about their experiences in foster care and the importance of extending services beyond age 18. Their testimony was very well received and the bill passed unanimously in the House Committee.

- O'Neal also explained the Governor included funding for extending foster care beyond age 18. Although the amount is reduced from last year, $369,000 is included in the budget for the Department of Children's Services to make available voluntary foster care services to youth ages 18 to 21.

III. Office of Independent Living Update –
Kim Crane Mallory, Department of Children's Services

- Mallory presented "Office of IL Update: YTAC" (refer to PowerPoint).
- Mallory asked the group for suggestions on how to get the word out to young people about the availability of services.
- Suggestions included; have presenters at various youth group meetings asking the youth what they need; have giveaways at fun gatherings/festivals; provide transportation; have a strong presence on social media.
- Telford explained many youth are ready to exit the system upon turning 18, but realize later they can benefit from the services. She suggested building in a "cooling off" period. Mallory responded the door remains open even if they initially refuse services. Morgan responded the Resource Centers and other partners can still educate the young people on the available services.
- Ragsdale suggested asking young people who are using or have used post-custody services to do outreach.
- Barlar expressed concerns about using language like "post-custody" and suggested trying to use terms that aren't associated with "the system."
- Ragsdale suggested "emerging adults."
- Aguzzi added DCS will continue to look at the data and begin digging deeper as more data is collected and will identify opportunities for growth and improvement in services.

IV. Update from Resource Centers

- Karen Morgan provided an update on South Memphis Alliance (SMA) – refer to handouts.
- Teresa Moore provided an update on Opportunity Passport at Monroe Harding in Nashville. The GED Program had 15 young people last year, the most to date, with four in one month. Mallory added Jim Casey recognized Youth Connections for having the highest/best employment numbers in the country. Moore added they are making youth engagement the main focus and are adopting new strategies to engage youth.
- Shantel Standefer provided an update on Child and Family Tennessee, Project NOW in Knoxville. She explained three youth have used the match option available through the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative. Genesis Hardin shared her own experience of using the match to help her move into safe housing and return to school.

V. October 2011 Report to Legislature – *Sumita Banerjee*

- Banerjee provided an update on the Annual Report submitted to the General Assembly in October 2011.
- She noted the top recommendation in the report was reauthorization and continued funding for the Tennessee Youth Empowerment Act of 2010. As previously discussed, legislation was introduced by the administration. The legislation removes the repeal date for the Act and the Governor's proposed budget includes funding for extending foster care services beyond age 18. The legislation is moving through the House and Senate with tremendous support.

- Banerjee thanked the Advisory Council for their help and feedback on the report.

VI. Update from the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) – *Nyasha Justice*

- Justice provided an update on the work the AOC is doing with specialized foster care review boards (FCRB).
- Specific professionals are recruited to serve on the boards, including an education specialist and representatives with a mental health and medical background. DHS provides a field worker to discuss benefit eligibility with the youth. The AOC is currently working to identify staff from THDA who could help address concerns and issues related to housing for the youth.
- There are currently 6 specialized boards (Shelby, Madison, Haywood, Tipton, Davidson and Johnson Counties) with an additional board in Johnson City starting in March 2012.
- Justice explained it is a slow process to start a new board. The process for Johnson City began in September and is expected to start operating in March. In order to start a board, there must be the support and cooperation of the courts, DCS and the community.
- Justice identified one of the challenges for the AOC as staff constraints. It is also a challenge to shift the mindset that services stop at age 18 and providing the education on the transition plans. AOC focuses on education and providing training on the transition plans. All the FCRBs will receive a targeted training on transition plans. Judges will also receive trainings on the extension of foster care and transitional living plan.
- Justice talked about the tremendous benefit of having Peer Advocates participate on the FCRB. They are youth who have been in foster care and have received post custody services. They are paid for their services. Unfortunately, it has been a challenge to identify youth who are available to serve. Justice asked the Council to let her know of any young people who could serve as Peer Advocates.
- Justice discussed the challenges they anticipate with the implementation of Fostering Connections, including the role of CASA (will they extend services beyond age 18?) and what the court oversight will look like.
- Wolf asked if Knox County has been considered for a specialized board. Justice responded Judge Irwin has expressed an interest, but they have not received the commitment and full investment of the courts and DCS to move forward with the development. Kinkaid added the Courts must be committed to providing the staff to coordinate and facilitate the boards.

VII. Future Meetings - *Linda O'Neal*

- O'Neal asked the group's thoughts on possible meeting ideas. DCS and the Resource Centers will continue to provide updates.
- Justice suggested an update on the implementation of Fostering Connections, including court oversight.
- Lee suggested having an event for the next meeting in May for foster care awareness month.
- Lee will work with TCCY to plan the meeting.

VIII. Other Business

- The group had a rich discussion regarding the future of YTAC. Members decided to create workgroups with specific issue areas, including education, employment, housing, mentoring, youth with mental and/or physical disabilities and transportation. Members may participate in more than one group and will work via email/conference calls between full YTAC meetings.
- Banerjee will include a list of the workgroups in an email to the Council to identify which group(s) they will participate in. Members will also be invited to suggest additional workgroups.
- Meeting adjourned.

STATE OF TENNESSEE
TENNESSEE COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH
Andrew Johnson Tower, Ninth Floor
710 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0800
(615) 741-2633 (FAX) 741-5956
1-800-264-0904

Youth Transitions Advisory Council

May 31, 2012
1:00 pm – 4:00 pm
Goodwill Industries of Middle Tennessee
937Herman Street, Nashville, Tennessee 37208

Welcome/Introductions/Acceptance of February Meeting Summary
- *Linda O'Neal*

Department of Children's Services and Office of Independent Living Update –
- *Debbie Miller, Department of Children's Services*

Update from Resource Centers
- *Karen Morgan, South Memphis Alliance*
- *Quatrece McKinney, Youth Connections at Monroe Harding*
- *Shantel Standefer, Child & Family Tennessee*

Peer Advocates Presentation
- *Peer Advocates*

Update from the Administrative Office of the Courts
- *Nyasha Justice*

TCCY Organizational Changes
- *Linda O'Neal*

2012 Report to the General Assembly due October 31, 2012

Future Meetings
- *August 28? 12:30pm – 3:30pm*
- *October 9? 12:30pm – 3:30pm*

Other Business

STATE OF TENNESSEE
TENNESSEE COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH
Andrew Johnson Tower, Ninth Floor
710 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0800
(615) 741-2633 (FAX) 741-5956
1-800-264-0904

YOUTH TRANSITIONS ADVISORY COUNCIL
MEETING SUMMARY
Goodwill Industries of Middle Tennessee
937 Herman Street, Nashville, TN 37208
May 31, 2012
1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Participants:

Linda O'Neal, Chair	Richard Kennedy	Steve Petty
Laura Bond	Quatrece McKinney	Lee Ragsdale
Jennipher Ford	Debbie Miller	Aneja Raiteri
Darci Halfman	Christy Montgomery	Anne Robertson
Genesis Hardin	Karen L. Morgan	Toni Shaw
Cheryl Hultman	Michael Myszka	Jimmy Wayne
Jacqueline Johnson	Kay Overbey	Ellyn Wilbur
Nyasha Justice	Latoya Phillips	Mark Wolf
Dustin Keller	Jonathan Peak	

IX. Welcome and Introductions– *Linda O'Neal*

- O'Neal welcomed the group and asked everyone to introduce him/herself.
- O'Neal reminded the group about TCCY's responsibilities and it's commitment to YTAC.
- Thanked Steve Petty and Dustin Keller for assisting with meeting preparation. Explained Sumita Banerjee had left the Commission and thanked her for her work on YTAC.

X. Acceptance of February Meeting Summary – *Linda O'Neal*

- O'Neal asked members to review the February Meeting summary and asked for revisions or edits.
- **IT WAS MOVED (MONTGOMERY) AND SECONDED (RAGSDALE) TO ACCEPT THE FEBRUARY 2012 MEETING SUMMARY. THE MOTION CARIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

XI. Department of Children's Services and Office of Independent Living Update – *Debbie Miller*

Refer to PowerPoint and tip sheet

- O'Neal thanked Miller for coming and explained Kim and David are training this week.

- Miller explained the original Fostering Youth Connections Act had an expiration date and only one time funding. The department needed an extension of the act to get federal approval and needed to revise DCS policies to coincide with federal regulations.

- Tennessee was one of the first states to get our revised policies approved by Administration for Children and Families (ACF) at federal level. This presentation and the related policies are not cast in stone. This is an ongoing working document as we continue to get guidance from ACF.

- The Fostering Connections Act legislation had a $1.25 million dollar fiscal note representing $500,000 federal IV-E dollars and $750,000 state dollars

    - To project this amount, the department used a representative number of youth and projected the cost for post-custody services. The sample assumed 380 youth served on a sliding scale based on when they turn 18 and when they leave (average length of stay).

    - The amount anticipated in federal funding is also based on a rough estimate. Starting July 1st the state can draw down IV-E dollars on any youth meeting criteria and over the age of 18. IV-E is an uncapped entitlement and would free up other federal dollars (Chaffee dollars) to use on other services.

- Miller stated the current rate of youth using post-custody services is about 20 percent. The youth adjudicated dependent neglect (D/N) use post-custody services about 50 percent. This indicates the juvenile justice (JJ) youth are not taking advantage of the program because they see it as a punishment and may have a home to go back to after custody. The department would like for the usage rate for D/N youth to be about 75 percent. However, most of the growth is really in the JJ population. If a JJ youth is in a IV-E eligible placement the state can use this federal funding for post-custody services.

- Refer to the "TIP SHEET" for services available for children who are eligible.

- POWERPOINT Presentation:

    - This PowerPoint is currently being used to train DCS staff across the state.

    - To align with federal nomenclature and to make the program more appealing to youth, the department has changed the name for Post-Custody Services to Extension of Foster Care Services.

    - Wolf asked if a listing is available of all IV-E eligible placements. Miller explained almost all DCS placements are eligible except the youth development centers. She explained research shows about 75 percent of youth who rent an apartment on their own after foster care will not be successful. Federal regulations allow independent supervised living but do not have a definition of this service. The department has traditional IV-E reimbursable placement but needs to go beyond these.

- Miller discussed some of the challenges currently with working within the federal guidelines. She explained transportation is a real tricky issue because DCS cannot pay for transportation to work or to school. She suggested that universities should provide a bus pass where appropriate within their

fulltime tuition to assist with transportation issues. Group agreed a bus pass provided through public colleges and universities in Tennessee should be a recommendation in the next report.

- O'Neal inquired about youth who are in a youth development center and therefore not eligible for the extension of foster care benefits. She encouraged DCS to explore developing special foster homes for a step down service in order for them to be eligible.

- Miller explained that this is mostly a staff education/communication issue. Staff thinks children adjudicated delinquent are across the board ineligible; however, the placement is what makes them ineligible not their adjudication. For example, children in foster homes are eligible regardless of whether they are adjudicated delinquent or dependent neglect. She is training and encouraging Foster Care Review Boards (FCRBs) to recommend this step down process.

- O'Neal thanked Miller for sharing this important information with the group.

XII. Update from Resource Centers – *Representatives*

- South Memphis Alliance - *Karen Morgan*
  Refer to printed report from South Memphis Alliance emailed to the group

  - Morgan explained 27 people have been served through opportunity passport with six people receiving financial literacy classes. Referrals have been difficult for the financial literacy classes so the classes will be offered on a rolling basis to ensure there will be enough participants to reach the goal of 40.

  - She also discussed their action plan to increase youth involvement and to include youth who are no longer in custody in creating the plan. They have begun to increase marketing and have reached out to several groups.

- Youth Connections at Monroe Harding - *Quatrece McKinney*

  - Youth connections have recently hired a new staff person for Opportunity Passport. This staff person transferred from another position at Monroe Harding. She has already received training from Raquel at Jim Casey.

  - She has already conducted four literacy classes and has ten people enrolled in the program.

  - Two youth have received the 401K match of $1,000 by investing $1,000 of their own funds.

  - Tawny Spinelli (passport participant and TCCY Commission Member) and Jimmy Wayne testified on behalf of the fostering connections act at the General Assembly.

- K-Town Youth Empowerment - *Mark Wolf*

  - Wolf invited several youth from K-Town and one Transitioning Support Professional who has participated in the Opportunity Passport Program.

    - K-Town has begun to have an active youth group and has hosted several events with an average of 20 in attendance.

- Three of the youth present from K-Town have all been a participant in the Foster Care system and shared the following recommendations:
    - The youth thanked all participants of YTAC for their work on behalf of foster youth.
    - They stressed the importance of ensuring youth have identification of some sort, i.e. Driver's License, Birth Certificate or Social Security Card prior to leaving custody.
    - Youth suggested having experiential classes rather than lecture-based classes. They stressed it is easier to show a person an activity rather than just telling them (i.e. interviewing, savings, checking, bank vs. credit cards, etc.). Allow them to fill out required paperwork while assisting them. Additionally, these classes should take you to an ATM and teach you about online banking.
    - Youth should be allowed to participate in extra curricular activities and have goals to achieve through this process. This can also be therapeutic if the youth has mental health needs.
    - Youth suggested Group home allowances and foster home allowances be reviewed for possible increases or have additional funding when they are released from custody to assist with furnishing an apartment.
        - Miller explained there is funding available for furniture and furnishings for apartments that can be requested through DCS staff. She will add this information to her training for staff.
    - Miller's comments highlighted the next suggestion for better communication of services and supports available during the extension of foster care services. They suggested the need for a mentor or someone who can walk them through the process.
    - They agreed with Miller's earlier suggestion for transportation assistance as this is a requirement to get to class and work.
    - The youth then inquired about their rights to see their records, such as their permanency plans and other DCS records.
        - Several YTAC participants explained access to records is a tricky issue and depends on what type of records and why the request is being made.
        - Miller explained youth should receive a copy of their permanency plan as you have a right to the plan. You should also receive a copy of your Transition and Independent Living plan as you are a part of creating these.

- Wolf thanked the group for letting the youth participate and share their recommendations.

XIII. Peer Advocates Presentation – Nyasha Justice

Refer to the PowerPoint entitled "Specialized Foster Care Review Boards" emailed after the meeting.

- Justice introduced the peer advocates who will present about the Specialized Foster Care Review Boards (SFCRBs).
- Peer Advocates (PAs) work with the SFCRBs and advocate on behalf of the youth. They serve as a mediator and can help the board understand the child and vice versus. PAs are assigned to a board not a youth and work for all youth 13-18 coming before the board.
- Justice talked about the make up of the board and the professionals who can help overcome issues. PAs are not members of the board and are compensated for their services.
- Before the end of 2012, SFCRBs should be located in Shelby, Tipton, Haywood, Madison, Davidson, Gibson, Sevier, Hamilton and Coffee Counties and Johnson City.
- Justice explained there are currently only five PAs working with SFCRBs. The PAs are only paid $25 per youth with a maximum of 300 youth per board. The PAs are not compensated a great deal of money but the process can be very healing and therapeutic for the PAs. Justice noted the PAs need support similar to the youth they assist as the PAs are also former foster youth and have similar concerns and issues.
- She has now started assigning mentors to peer advocates and increased their training and shadowing opportunities. She has begun to do transition plans for the PAs.
- She also asked for the group's help in identifying PAs for Hamilton and Coffee counties. Please let her know if you have recommendations.
- Wolf asked about the status of creating a SFCRB in Knox County. Justice explained request must be initiated through the court and she has not been contacted by the court to start a SFCRB in Knox.
- O'Neal thanked the youth and Justice for their presentations and appreciated the difference they make.

XIV. TCCY Organizational Changes – *Linda O'Neal*

- O'Neal discussed changes at TCCY related to the Children's Program Outcome Review Team (CPORT) being eliminated. CPORT worked with DCS on the Quality Service Review Process. This elimination, combined with shrinking federal funding, led to a reduction of 40 percent of TCCY staff.
- She also discussed the appointing authority change as it relates to the Executive Director position. Starting October 1, 2012, the governor will appoint the executive director and serve at his pleasure instead of the Commission.

- She thanked the advisory council for their work and their commitment to the cause.

XV. 2012 Report to the General Assembly Due October 31, 2012 – *Linda O'Neal*

- O'Neal reminded participants about the annual reporting requirement for YTAC due on or before October 31 to the General Assembly. She also explained the statue provides the required components of the report including several data elements provided by DCS.

- The 2011 report recommended continuing and expanding Fostering Connections. This legislation was passed and the program will continue indefinitely.

- O'Neal stated the Council should begin to consider recommendations for the 2012 report. Additionally, she asked about workgroups and if this would assist the Council. There was only a limited response from the group prior to the meeting about workgroups so they were not created. The group indicated workgroup are not currently needed and this can be revisited later.

- Participants provided the following as possible recommendations to the 2012 report, which will be discussed, consolidated or expanded at the next meeting:

    - Resource centers should be expanded to provide a "one-stop shop" for foster youth and former foster youth.

    - Transportation has been mentioned throughout the meeting as a need and options to provide this should be considered. The group does recommend all state-funded universities should provide a bus pass as a part of the tuition costs.

    - 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 and lose credits affecting their graduation. Accelerated credit recovery or transportation to the previous school system or other educational options should be recommended.

    - The group recommends all state-funded universities provide or keep residence halls open during holidays for foster youth/former foster youth to have a home during this time.

    - The group would like to see more participation from Higher Education with YTAC to assist with some of these issues.

    - Increase specialized foster care review boards and peer advocates across the state while also recruiting organizations and programs to support PAs.

    - Continue to increase numbers of youth who utilize extended foster care services. Hultman stated CASA has created a program to educate volunteers and youth about extended foster care services and issues transitioning foster youth have. More organizations working with foster youth could receive this type of training.

    - Encourage the Tennessee Code Commission to change references in the statue from post custody to extended foster care services.

- TennCare should provide presumptive eligibility for all foster youth as they leave the system. Miller explained the TennCare Bureau was hesitant to allow this when the legislation had a termination date, but is currently exploring these options now that the program is ongoing. Also, the age for TennCare coverage will increase to age 26 in 2014 with implementation of the federal Affordable Care Act.

- Encourage mentors for transitioning foster youth and have a provider contract providing mentors for foster care youth.

- Youth should get a photo id by age 15-16 even if they do not get a Driver's License. Youth should also be encouraged to register to vote. Research shows the earlier a person starts to vote the more likely they are to continue to vote.

- O'Neal explained these recommendations have been recorded and will be provided at the next meeting to begin to draft the 2012 report.

XVI. Future Meetings

- Staff has proposed dates for meetings in August and October and the group approved these dates. Agendas for these meetings would again include reports from youth, resource centers and DCS while also allowing time to discuss and approve information for the report.

- O'Neal recognized Jimmy Wayne and thanked him for his testimony to the legislature.

- Jimmy Wayne stated he is tweeting about meeting. He thanked participants for all they do for foster youth. He also described how honored he was to share his story and help get the legislation passed. He is attending YTAC "to see what really happens and to thank those who work for youth behind closed doors."

- O'Neal again thanked Jimmy for his work and Mark for bringing youth to the meeting.

There being no additional business, the meeting adjourned.

STATE OF TENNESSEE
TENNESSEE COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH
Andrew Johnson Tower, Ninth Floor
710 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0800
(615) 741-2633 (FAX) 741-5956
1-800-264-0904

Youth Transitions Advisory Council

August 28, 2012
12:30 pm – 3:30 pm Central Time
Goodwill Industries of Middle Tennessee
938Herman Street, Nashville, Tennessee 37208

Agenda

Welcome/Introductions/Acceptance of May Meeting Summary
- *Linda O'Neal*

Department of Children's Services and Office of Independent Living Update –
- *Kim Crane Mallory Department of Children's Services*

Update from Resource Centers
- *Pamela Cash, Youth Connections at Monroe Harding*
- *Shantel Standefer, Child & Family Tennessee*

Youth Villages Transition Living Program
- *Mary Lee, Esq. Business Development Specialist, Youth Villages*

2012 Report to the General Assembly due October 31, 2012
- *Discussion and Recommendations*

Next Meeting
- *October 9 12:30pm – 3:30pm*
- *Future dates*

Other Business

STATE OF TENNESSEE
TENNESSEE COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH
Andrew Johnson Tower, Ninth Floor
710 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0800
(615) 741-2633 (FAX) 741-5956
1-800-264-0904

YOUTH TRANSITIONS ADVISORY COUNCIL
MEETING SUMMARY
Goodwill Industries of Middle Tennessee
937 Herman Street, Nashville, TN 37208
August 28, 2012
12:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Participants:

Linda O'Neal, Chair
Sumita Banerjee
Julia Barlar
Pam Cash
Darci Halfman
Jacqueline Johnson
Mary Jones
Nyasha Justice
Joyce Kearney
Dustin Keller
Richard Kennedy
Kristy Leach
Mary Lee
Kim Crane Mallory
James Martin
Christy Montgomery
Michael Myszka
Kay Overbey
Steve Petty
Lee Ragsdale
Kathy Rodgers
Alysia Williams
Mark Wolf

Welcome and Introductions– *Linda O'Neal*

- O'Neal thanked the group for the participation and committee
- O'Neal welcomed the group and asked everyone to introduce him/herself.
- O'Neal reminded the group about TCCY's responsibilities and it's commitment to YTAC.

XVII. Acceptance of May Meeting Summary – *Linda O'Neal*

- O'Neal asked members to review the May Meeting summary and asked for revisions or edits.
- **IT WAS MOVED (RAGSDALE) AND SECONDED (JOHNSON) TO ACCEPT THE MAY 2012 MEETING SUMMARY. THE MOTION CARIED UNANIMOUSLY.**
- O'Neal thanked Steve Petty and Dustin Keller for assisting with meeting preparation and for the meeting summary.

XVIII. Department of Children's Services and Office of Independent Living Update – *Kim Crane Mallory*

Refer to PowerPoint and tip sheet emailed to participants following the meeting

- O'Neal thanked Mallory for coming to speak with the Council and give an update fr0m DCS.
- Mallory stated DCS has trained close to 3,000 staff and others across the state about fostering connections and the extension of foster care services. The department now has an online training for staff and the public. DCS is also working with TennCare to make sure youth can remain on TennCare past their 18th birthday. She also stated the department is working to make information simple and provide one-page fact sheets and other information that is easily readable and understandable.
- Mallory discussed how she and other staff are reviewing regional files in anticipation of their Brian A. review of independent living (IL). IL also has an updated website. Mallory encouraged participants to review the website and provide additional suggestions for its content.
- DCS is currently working on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with safety to provide photo identification for all youth over 16. The department also has awarded a contract for a needs assessment around independent living and transitioning youth. Following the assessment, the department hopes to have a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a full continuum of services for this population.
- O'Neal thanked Mallory for sharing this important information with the group.

XIX. Update from Resource Centers – *Representatives*

- South Memphis Alliance was not present at the meeting but a written report was included in the packet and emailed to the group.
- Youth Connections at Monroe Harding – *Pam Cash*
    - Cash stated a youth from their group recently attended a Jim Casey Conference. This was a life-changing trip for him and he will present at a future YTAC meeting about this trip.
    - Monroe Harding is a leadership academy partner with DCS and recently held this event with over 30 young people in attendance. Over 15 young adults were registered to vote and several health screenings were conducted.
    - Since the report at the last meeting, five students received their high school diploma, three completed their GED, one graduated from College and recently interviewed for a job, and one person enrolled in the Navy. Cash stated she believes these numbers serve as a reminder to catch young people early so we can help them achieve their goals in life.
    - Monroe Harding is always looking for new community partnerships to allow their student to intern or work for these partners. Essex Bargain Hunt stores are a new partner and have already employed four young people.

XX. Youth Villages Transitional Living Program – Mary Lee

Refer to handouts entitled "Youth Villages Transitional Living Program," "Transitional Living; A new beginning for young adults," and "After Foster Care and Juvenile Justice."

- Lee stated the transitional living program at Youth Villages (YV) started in 1999 through a generous donor to YV who wanted to provide services to a population slipping through the cracks. Transitioning youth researcher and consultant Rusty Clark helped developed the model. Housing for these youth has become a major component of the program, along with employment opportunities and education.

- Each independent living specialist works with a caseload of less than 10 youth, meeting with them at least once a week. Each specialist is also on call 24-hours a day and seven days a week for their identified youth.

- The average length of stay in the program ranges from seven to nine months. During this time, the specialist works on a treatment plan with the youth around short and long-term goals.

- YV has been working on a clinical trial of the program to evaluate results and outcomes for the program. The study includes 1,300 youth, with 60 percent receiving YV's program and 40 percent receiving the traditional services from DCS. Data about the success of the program are included in the handouts and the PowerPoint. Data are captured over a two-year period for each youth and the results should be released soon.

- Youth in YV's program live in community housing and YV does not pay for or own housing. The program has many referral sources, not simply DCS, and outcomes have preliminary shown great improvement.

XXI. 2012 Report to the General Assembly Due October 31, 2012 – *Linda O'Neal*

- O'Neal reminded participants about the YTAC annual report due to the General Assembly on or before October 31. She also explained the statute provides the required components of the report, including several data elements provided by DCS. TCCY is working with DCS, Resource Centers and others for data for the report.

- A handout summarizing the suggested recommendations for the report from the May meeting was provided and emailed to participants. O'Neal asked those present today to provide feedback on these suggestions and others. Staff hopes to have a draft report by the October meeting for the group to review and discuss.

- O'Neal led a discussion on each recommendation with the group for approval and identification of additional suggestions.

- Justice discussed the importance of the educational recommendation involving accelerated credit recovery, scheduling systems, etc. She stated the most severe problems are when a child is placed in contract facilities and private schools. Varying schedules and block scheduling present challenges.

- O'Neal also stated school completion is typically overlooked when transitioning children from placements. Children often miss the start or end of a school year in order to 'complete' a treatment

program. She suggested courts should be sensitive to the school schedule in order to assist in these transitions.

- Ware mentioned the difficulty of ensuring the child is in the least restrictive environment, and when a child ages out of custody, it becomes hard to encourage extended foster care or keep the child to ensure they complete the school year.

- Justice emphasized the need to be creative for children who age out even if they have to go on weekends or stay later to complete school prior to exiting custody. She also discussed the difficulty for children transitioning from a foster care placement. Most schools will initially place them in an alternative school setting.

- Mallory and Banerjee mentioned a new grant received by Oasis and suggested someone from higher education should be invited to participate. Kennedy offered to reach out to Independent Colleges and Universities to see if they would participate in YTAC. Justice mentioned several specialized foster care review boards have been able to have university admissions officers participate. The group discussed other possibilities for involving higher education staff, including disability coordinators, admissions or student affairs representatives.

- Banerjee asked about the security of the funding for Resource Centers. Originally, they were only expected to be funded for a short term and then sustained without state funding. Mallory stated the department does not currently have any plans to decrease funding for the centers at this time. There have been preliminary conversations to expand the program to Chattanooga. O'Neal acknowledged the need to discuss the importance of maintaining core funding for this infrastructure and to look at expansion based on the number of youth, including Chattanooga as a priority forv expansion. Mallory recommended the group look at core supports and services to be replicated where a complete resource center is not feasible.

- Lee and O'Neal both recommended ensuring transitional living services are available for youth who are not eligible for extension services. This included recommending step down placements for juvenile justice youth in order for them to be eligible for extension services. Justice reminded the group about the statute in place for transition plans for 17-year-old youth. Practice appears to be the problem, with education needed for judges and attorneys to make this happen. O'Neal commented this might illustrate the need to create a training category for judges, attorneys, youth, foster care review boards, DCS staff, CASAs, foster parents, providers, etc. in the recommendations.

- Myszka mentioned how the affordable care act will allow youth to roll over on TennCare until age 26 without reapplying. Justice understood an agreement was currently in place allowing youth to begin reapplication for TennCare within 30 days of their 18th birthday. O'Neal asked Mallory and Banerjee to investigate this within their respective agencies. Along these lines, Myszka recommended practice guidelines be developed to include a focus on transitioning to the adult system for youth. There is a need to make providers and the system at large aware of the challenges of this change.

- Ware reported the Mental Health Co-op has a group of case managers specializing in transition age youth and could make a presentation at a future meeting if needed.

- Justice stated the mentoring recommendation may be an education issue about the importance of building linkages and should be phrased as a significant person in their life as in relational permanency. A person may not be a close blood relative but most youth have an adult who is significant and important to them. This may not be the traditional mentor but a support person or system. Wolf commented how funding has ended for several programs such as Youth Villages and Amachi, in contrast to the need for these services. Lee mentioned YV has a training program around mentoring and they would be willing to share this with others.

- Kearney asked if we could recommend a requirement for providers to find a stable adult in their life post custody to manage their important documents as these young people may frequently lose this paperwork. O'Neal replied at the very least a replacement mechanism should be created to get birth certificates and other paperwork as needed. Justice said the court does have training about the need for a mentor or significant adult who can keep these documents as well as provide a stable address for these youth. Banerjee would like to see the recommendation include the department providing the id at no cost or low cost. There is concern the cost will fall on the young person. Lee also recommended this information be included on the youth website about how to replace these documents and how to get the state's free voter id. Justice expanded this to include a listing of all essential documentation with instructions for replacements in an effort to help you become self-supporting. Additional recommendations were made about having a *DropBox* type program (cloud storage) or flash drive where this information could be safely or securely stored.

- Overby asked if Guardian Ad Litems (GAL) should be included in the training list discussed earlier. Justice stated the GAL training has been adjusted to include a section on transitioning youth and encouraging youth to accept extension of foster care services.

- Justice mentioned three additional Specialized Foster Care Review Boards (SFCRB) are currently in process. Hamilton and Rutherford counties will be functional by the end of the year. Coffee County will be trained and functional by early next year. Shelby, Tipton, Haywood, Nashville, Johnson City and Sevier are the current SFCRBs. She does not anticipate the AOC will be able to train and support more than three additional boards in a year. She has encouraged other boards to use the transitioning youth forms created for SFCRBs. AOC does not currently have the resources to provide training to all boards requesting assistance. For example, Cookeville will start to use these forms and possibly Knox County. Justice still has open positions for Peer Advocates including Nashville, Haywood, Hamilton, Coffee, and Tipton Counties.

- O'Neal recommended using the law committee of the Administrative Office of the Courts instead of the code commission for changing the language in the statue from Post Custody Services to Extension of Foster Care Services.

- Ragsdale talked about the similarities of reentry for adults and 'reentry' for youth. He discussed the need for better information sharing among systems in a confidential manner to be able to provide streamlined services.

- Justice would like to see data collected to ensure permanency hearings are occurring for transition planning. O'Neal asked if we should see if this is already collected through TFACTS or in some other way.

- Overby asked about options for children to visit their parents in prison as some states have summer camp programs allowing children to stay with their parent. Justice replied some rural courts have standing orders prohibiting children from visiting their parent in prison. Ragsdale also mentioned some community programs provide transportation for youth to visit parents in other cities. O'Neal talked about the Amachi program focusing on children of incarcerated parents.

- Banerjee inquired if the upcoming report would include a discussion of the prior year's report and whether some of those are still current and need to be re-recommended. O'Neal then reviewed the past recommendations with the group. Two out of the five have been achieved and others have some coordinated efforts.

- Banerjee also asked if the youth survey would be replicated for this report as in the last report. YV and the resource centers were helpful with completing this information last year. O'Neal said the survey may not be replicated because of time and other commitments of TCCY staff. We will look at including youth comments or stories as suggested by Lee.

- O'Neal encouraged the group to send other ideas or suggestions to O'Neal, Petty, or Keller.

- O'Neal explained these recommendations have been recorded and will be provided at the next meeting in draft form for the 2012 report.

XXII. Future Meetings

- O'Neal asked about agenda items for the next meeting. Previously mentioned suggestions included having Resource Center updates and Mental Health Co-op's case management for transition youth. Draft report recommendations will also be discussed.

- Participants mentioned having someone from Oasis to talk about their programs around transitioning youth and asking someone from DCS' education division to discuss their programs and/or participate in meetings.

- Future dates will scheduled at the October Meeting

- O'Neal thanked people for their participation and for their work in helping youth transition.

There being no additional business, the meeting adjourned.

STATE OF TENNESSEE
TENNESSEE COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH
Andrew Johnson Tower, Ninth Floor
710 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0800
(615) 741-2633 (FAX) 741-5956
1-800-264-0904

Youth Transitions Advisory Council

October 9, 2012
12:30 pm – 3:30 pm Central Time
Goodwill Industries of Middle Tennessee
939Herman Street, Nashville, Tennessee 37208

Agenda

Welcome/Introductions/Acceptance of August Meeting Summary
- *Linda O'Neal*

Oasis Center of Nashville
- *Judy Freudenthal, Senior Director of Youth Engagement and Action*
- *Michelle Hall, Director of Transitional Living Services*

Department of Children's Services and Office of Independent Living Update –
- *Debbie Miller, Executive Director, Family and Child Well Being Department of Children's Services*

Update from Resource Centers
- *Pamela Cash, Youth Connections at Monroe Harding*
- *Shantel Standefer, Child & Family Tennessee*

Transition to Independence Process - Mental Health Coop
- *Andrea Westerfield, Program Manager for Child and Adolescent Services*

2012 Report to the General Assembly due October 31, 2012
- *Discussion*

Next Meeting
- *Future dates 12:30pm – 3:30pm*

Other Business

STATE OF TENNESSEE
TENNESSEE COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH
Andrew Johnson Tower, Ninth Floor
710 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0800
(615) 741-2633 (FAX) 741-5956
1-800-264-0904

YOUTH TRANSITIONS ADVISORY COUNCIL
MEETING SUMMARY
Goodwill Industries of Middle Tennessee
937 Herman Street, Nashville, TN 37208
October 9, 2012
12:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Participants

Linda O'Neal, Chair
Sumita Banerjee
Julia Barler
Pam Cash
Amanda Futral
Gayle Feltner
Judy Freudenhal
Karin Freyer
Joe Goldsmith
Darci Halfman
Michelle Hall
Joyce Kearney
Dustin Keller
Richard Kennedy
Kristy Leach
Marquise Lightford
James Martin
Debbie Miller
Kay Overbey
Steve Petty
Lee Ragsdale
Anne Robertson
Andrea Westerfield
Alysia Williams

XXIII. Welcome and Introductions– *Linda O'Neal*

- O'Neal welcomed the group and asked everyone to introduce him/herself.
- O'Neal reminded the group about TCCY's responsibilities and its' commitment to YTAC.
- O'Neal thanked Steve Petty and Dustin Keller for assisting with meeting preparation.

XXIV. Acceptance of August Meeting Summary – *Linda O'Neal*

- O'Neal asked members to review the August Meeting summary and asked for revisions or edits.
- **IT WAS MOVED (RAGSDALE) AND SECONDED (FELTNER) TO ACCEPT THE AUGUST 2012 MEETING SUMMARY. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

XXV. Oasis Center of Nashville – *Judy Freudenthal and Michelle Hall*

Refer to Oasis Center Handouts

- Freudenthal distributed information about the Youth Development Learning Collaborative program at Oasis. This is a program funded with Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP) federal funding geared primarily at preventing teen pregnancy. The program currently has collaboratives in Middle and East Tennessee with an additional program starting in West Tennessee. The Centers for Excellence for Children in State's Custody provide evaluation of the program.

- She explained research shows youth in foster care are six times more likely to be at risk for teen pregnancy than youth in the general population. The teen outreach includes 25 group sessions consisting of life skill building and 20 hours of service learning. Evaluation shows six-months after the program burnout does decrease.

- Freudenthal also discussed the service-learning component and compared it to pre-employment training. The program does not currently work with Volunteer TN but is trying to present at their conference. She also stated the program is proven to prevent truancy by building connectedness.

- Hall discussed the residential program for transitioning youth who are experiencing homelessness. She stated two million 18-24 year olds are homeless nationally, and 300 youth living on the streets, in shelters, etc. in Nashville. Metro schools have identified 2,002 youth as doubling up or in unhealthy living environments. More than 25 percent of youth exiting custody will experience homelessness within 12 months of discharge.

- She discussed the difficulty of working with youth who are homeless and fighting for independence after leaving custody. The outreach center at OASIS helps bridge this gap and make youth feel comfortable working with the program.

- Trauma-informed care and training are used as cornerstones for the residential and outreach center. This foundation helps explain how trauma and stress affect the brain and can explain why youth who are able to get housing or a job, simply do not.

- One treatment for trauma being used at OASIS, neuro-feedback, is showing great promise and is now available to the public.

XXVI. Update from Resource Centers – *Representatives*

- South Memphis Alliance - *Karen Morgan*
  Refer to printed report from South Memphis Alliance emailed to the group. No presentation was made at the meeting due to scheduling conflicts for Morgan.

- Youth Connections at Monroe Harding – *Pam Cash and Marquise Lightford.*

    - Lightford talked about the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative Conference in St. Louis and how they are trying to expand the age for transition to 14-21. He would like to get a larger youth group to support various advocacy efforts. He asked the group for ideas about how to use people not currently or previously in the foster care system to also be supportive and advocate on the young person's behalf. The group discussed the differences with each group.

- O'Neal asked about the most interesting/best part of the trip. Lightford discussed how the people made him feel comfortable and not what he expected. Ragsdale inquired about the commonality around issues and needs among the young people at the conference. Lightford explained there are core issues in common but others have issues in their state that we do not have here and vice versa.

- Lightford said information is power and he can no longer have certain excuses for his actions or inactions. He hopes to use the information learned in his everyday life. He is currently an engineering student at Nashville State and is taking five classes.

- O'Neal asked Lightford how the group could improve conditions for young people transitioning. He said we should help young people understand and separate their needs from their wants. Then we should help the young person get their needs met.

- In reference to concerns he hears from other young people, Lightford said he has heard about caseworkers not doing their jobs. He suggested deadlines for both youth and workers as a compromise. He also stated we need more data on youth and caseworkers to make sure they are each doing their part. A mutual contract for both you and caseworkers can help them both do what they should.

XXVII. Department of Children's Services and Office of Independent Living Update – *Debbie Miller*

Refer to PowerPoint

- O'Neal thanked Miller for coming and reported Kim Crane Mallory and Dave Agguzi are training this week.

- Miller explained the data in the PowerPoint referred to the last fiscal year. Custody rates in Davidson County are low and that influences the number of youth who are eligible for transition services. Some areas of the state have great rates of participation relative to their population. Data is not currently available regarding the uptake of services or those who are eligible but not receiving. She hopes delinquent numbers will begin to rise as more staff, youth and providers understand eligibility is placement based and not adjudication based. Much of the other data, (i.e. race and gender) are consistent with the percentages of youth in custody.

- Their focus groups and surveys have illustrated youth are unaware of services or wish to be "done" with DCS. This demonstrates more training and education is needed about the availability of services. Also, as a possible alternative for youth who wish to be "done' with DCS, the department needs to work on to get services to them other than through traditional DCS offices. These youth could go to a private provider or another office/location for assistance.

- The program is also working to compile data on youth who achieve their educational goals. Staff is working to create a baseline of educational goals for each youth that can be compared to later success.

- Miller stated DCS is working with provider agencies to define supervised independent living settings and whether there are unique characteristics for rural/urban, GED/college, etc.

- Kennedy asked if more work is happening to ensure youth step down from youth development centers to IV-E eligible placements in order to be eligible for these services. Miller replied Kim has worked hard in her training to make sure DCS staff is working on this. She also mentioned a need for the juvenile courts to assist with this process and for juvenile courts to have a better understanding of how this will assist youth.

XXVIII. Transition to Independence Process – Mental Health Cooperative – *Andrea Westerfield*

Refer to the PowerPoint

- Westerfield explained staff at MHC wanted to be more successful with transition youth. They researched available options for case management programs that are evidence based. Staff chose the "TIP" model and combined it traditional case management.

- She stated youth in the program are experiencing a range of issues affecting their transition, compounded by the possibility of not having a stable support system.

- O'Neal asked if these youth are able to stay on insurance until age 21, or are there other issues with coverage. Westerfield explained youth do typically remain on insurance; however, because these youth frequently change placements and living arrangements, renewal and recertification are issues because youth do not get information or their parents do not continue certifying them.

- The program focuses on youth ages 16-21 who are in transition and receiving mental health services. Currently the program that started in July 2012 serves 120 youth. The program hsa a team approach as do other case management programs. There are only two case managers now and they are looking for a third. Typically, teams include a supervisor and psychiatrist and nurse practitioner and more than five case managers. There is currently a waiting list for the program.

- O'Neal asked the group if other mental health organizations have similar teams or programs. No one present was aware of other similar programs.

XXIX. 2012 Report to the General Assembly Due October 31, 2012 – *Linda O'Neal*

- O'Neal reminded participants about the annual reporting requirement for YTAC with a report due to the General Assembly on or before October 31. She also explained the statue provides the required components of the report, including several data elements provided by DCS.

- Participants were previously sent a draft of the recommendations section. O'Neal commented how last year we made a few recommendations mostly around the Fostering Connections legislation compared to this year when we have several important areas.

- Ragsdale stated these recommendations are all interrelated and interwoven as well.

- O'Neal projected the draft and made edits recommended by and agreed to by participants attending the meeting. The revised recommendations will be incorporated into the report.

XXX. Future Meetings

- Participants discussed next meetings dates and concluded the group would not meet in December. The group will meet next in early 2013 and staff will send out dates to the list when they are established.

There being no additional business, the meeting adjourned.

Appendix C

Resource Center Reports

Youth Transition Advisory Council Report on Resource Centers

Monroe Harding

- **History**
  Monroe Harding was established in 1893 to provide a home for orphaned children. Throughout the years, we have served over 15,000 youth and today we continue to provide services for youth and their families throughout middle Tennessee. Monroe Harding's mission is to guide and support the most vulnerable children and youth across a bridge to personal independence and success within a safe and nurturing environment. Monroe Harding provides both residential and non-residential programs. The residential program provides a home for at-risk youth who have been removed from their homes due to abuse, neglect and behavioral problems. The non-residential programs are: Project SHARE, which matches at-risk elementary students with adult mentors; Independent Living, which provides a safe place for youth to live as they transition out of care into the community; and Youth Connections, which is a one-stop shop resource center for young people ages 16-23 who are currently in, or aging out of, the foster care system.
- **Core services**
  Youth Connections has been in existence for almost 7 years and has focused on quality performance since inception. The center provides an assortment of services focused on empowering youth through their transition out of care. Youth Connections houses five major programs: Opportunity Passport™ financial management, life skills, Stepping Stones employment training, GED education, and an in-house thrift store specifically for foster youth. Through our programs and staff relations, we encourage personal stability and a healthy transition into adulthood for all young adults involved in Youth Connections.
- **Local Partnerships**
  Youth Connections continues to partner with the Department of Children's Services, Nashville Career Advancement Center and US Bank.
  Through our Stepping Stones program MH partners with several local businesses and organizations such as Essex Bargain Hunt Stores, Macy's, and The Shop Barber and Hair Salon. These businesses have agreed to provide employment opportunities or vocational training to prepare the young people for the workforce.
  Youth Connections informally collaborates with Oasis Center, Y-Build, Job Corp, United Neighborhood Health Care, Youth Villages and the Community Advisory Board to provide services to youth who do not meet the criteria to be in DCS custody. This group of young people can receive various services through the mentioned agencies such as referral's to community resources, financial assistance, counseling, and mentoring.
- **Successes**
  Since Youth Connections has been in existence, over 74 young people have obtained their GED through their participation in the GED classes and 80% of Stepping Stones participants have obtained employment with assistance of the vocation coordinator. Also, 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 invest in a Roth IRA.

- **Challenges & Barriers**
  Many of the young people that 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, 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 makes 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. The organization continues to assess its' programs and make changes and improvements where needed. 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.
  Over the summer, one of the youth Opportunity Passport participants attended Jim Casey's Youth Leadership Summit in St. Louis, Missouri. He returned to Nashville with a wealth of knowledge and new experiences. This young person has already taken steps to recruit additional young people to serve on a Youth Leadership Board. The board's purpose is to give young people a voice by advocating for themselves and other young people who are currently in the foster care system.

Resource Center Report

YTAC Annual Report/Update
Report Completed by: Pamela Cash
Nashville Knoxville Memphis **(bold selection)**

	Previous Year	**Year to Date**
Opportunity Passport™		
Number of new youth enrolled	28	39
# of Financial Literacy Classes offered	11	11
# of Asset Specific Classes offered	20	23
% of youth with favorable post-test outcome	100%	80%
OPPS Surveys		
(April & October only), % of youth completing an OPPS survey	April 86%/October 80%	April 63%
Community Partnership Boards		
Number of board meetings	0	0
Number of new door openers created	0	3
Life Skills Classes		
Number of life skills classes held	21	23
Total number of participants in life skills classes	72	105
% of youth showing increased proficiency pre to post assessment	100%	100%
Youth Leadership & Engagement		
Number of youth leadership activities offered	4	9

Youth Transition Advisory Council Report on Resource Centers

Child & Family Tennessee

- **History**

Child & Family Tennessee is a private, non-profit agency that began through the vision of volunteers from a local church who wanted to meet the needs of unwed mothers in 1929. Child & Family's mission is *to strengthen the community by strengthening families through prevention, treatment and advocacy services.* Our agency is fully accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare organizations (JCAHO), and is licensed by the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Development Disabilities, the Tennessee Department of Health, and Tennessee Department of Children's Services. In the 1960s, Child & Family began providing residential care to youth placed in the State of Tennessee's custody. The agency opened the area's only emergency shelter for runaway and homeless youth in 1978. Our 31 years of experience with runaway, homeless and at risk teenagers is complemented by 18 years of experience providing outreach services to youth in local schools, 10 years of experience providing street outreach services, 15 years of Transitional Living services for older youth and young adults, and 4 years of permanency services for youth in foster care.

- **Core services**

Project NOW (Navigating Opportunities that Work) is one of over 35 evidence based programs operated under the umbrella of Child & Family Tennessee (CFT). Project NOW will provide Individual Development Account (IDA) and Resource Center services to youth. Participants will be adolescents and young adults age 14 to 23 (until the client's 24th birthday), who have a current or previous connection to the State's foster care system. Project NOW will also allow youth access to the agency's existing transitional living services for youth. Project NOW will additionally include an IDA component to meet what is currently an unmet need for youth in transition in East Tennessee. The project will serve any youth meeting criteria living within the 16-county Department of Children's Services (DCS) Knox, Smoky Mountain or East Tennessee Regions. Clients will be offered thirteen (13) activities through Knoxville's Jim CaseyYouth Opportunities Initiative (JCYOI) approach. Activities fall within the domains of independence identified by Brendto et al in the reclaiming youth approach to positive youth development.

- **Local Partnerships**

Partners within the Community include:
Knoxville Youth Transition Council
Knox County, Smoky Mountain, and East Tennessee Department of Children's Services
Child & Family Tennessee Runaway Shelter, Transitional Living Program (TLP), and Street Outreach
K-Town Youth Empowerment Network
Knox County Juvenile Court
Knox Area Compassion Coalition
Youth Villages Transitional Living Program (TLP)
Goodwill Industries
University of Tennessee Work Achievement Values Education (WAVE) GED program
Knox County Public Defender's Office
University of Tennessee Center for Parenting
Boy Scouts of America
Knoxville Interfaith Network (KIN)
Youth Villages Governor's Mentoring Program
Knoxville TVA Employees Credit Union
YMCA Knoxville Knox County Health Department

Tenants Choice Property Management Knox Auto Parts Emerald Youth Foundation Knoxvile CAC Transit Omnivisions Camelot Care Centers ChildHelp USA TN Tennessee School of Beauty Excent Ultimate Life Summit SEEED of Knoxville TribeOne Smoky Mountain Financial

- **Successes**
  - To date, 45 youth have completed Financial Literacy courses and 40 have opened IDA accounts.
  - 31 youth have kept their IDA accounts open to date.
  - An additional 10 youth have registered to begin attending Financial Literacy courses this month.
  - Thus far, 12 youth have completed matches, totaling $4,168.72
  - A former barrier of youth under 18 not having co-signers to open IDA accounts has been resolved. Knoxville TVA Employees Credit Union now allows these youth to open IDA accounts without this requirement

- **Challenges & Barriers**
  - Transportation can be a barrier when serving young people in transition. We have found that many youth do not have access to personal transportation and, even though Financial Literacy courses are held near a major bus stop, not all youth have access to public transportation.
  - Current banking partner contract does not require Project NOW staff signature for youth to make withdraws. As such, youth are able to make unauthorized withdraws at any time

- **Next Steps**

During the next year, Child & Family Tennessee will continue to:

- Enroll youth in Financial Literacy courses,
- Assist youth in opening Individual Deposit Accounts (IDA) with Project NOW's banking partner,
- Build community partnerships around education, employment, housing, and other support services.
- Develop support and processes to avoid youth making personal withdraws from IDA accounts—ex: peer advice networks, utilizing stipend opportunities, etc.

Resource Center Report

YTAC Annual Report/Update
Report Completed by:
Nashville **Knoxville** Memphis **(bold selection)**

	Previous Year	**Year to Date**
Opportunity Passport™		
Number of new youth enrolled		18
# of Financial Literacy Classes offered		4 sessions
# of Asset Specific Classes offered		3
% of youth with favorable post-test outcome		100%
OPPS Surveys		
(April & October only), % of youth completing an OPPS survey		89% (April)
Community Partnership Boards		
Number of board meetings		9Youth/9 Community
Number of new door openers created		4
Life Skills Classes		
Number of life skills classes held		23
Total number of participants in life skills classes		10
% of youth showing increased proficiency pre to post assessment		100%
Youth Leadership & Engagement		
Number of youth leadership activities offered		9

Youth Transition Advisory Council Year End Resource Center Report
SMA, Inc.

South Memphis Alliance (SMA) opened our doors in 2000 to help organize neighborhood associations in the urban communities of South Memphis. Over time we've expanded our services to serve youth in foster care and families in crisis. Despite our growth, we hold fast to our core belief that civic engagement is the bedrock of strong communities, and that **strong communities promote stable families.**

Our work focuses largely on four core initiatives:

Dream Seekers Initiative works with young people transitioning from foster care;

Hope Chest supports services for pregnant and parenting teens who are or were in foster care;

Stand By Me provides behavioral health education services focused on alcohol, drug and HIV/AIDS prevention for youth aged 13-21;

Community Action Panel is composed of community leaders from over a dozen South Memphis civic groups.

In January 2000, after working for nearly 10years within his neighborhood association, Reginald Milton decided to dedicate his life to community organizing. He founded South Memphis Alliance (SMA) to work with other urban communities and help them start their own civic organizations.

For the next four years SMA worked out of a 10' x 10' office in a run-down community center. Reginald and a handful of like-minded volunteers struggled to support the associations that had joined the alliance. Monthly activity included hosting community meetings, scheduling time with governmental and business leaders, and coordinating civic engagement activities.

Then SMA was charged by community members to confront a large and powerful company operating in South Memphis that was environmentally polluting the neighborhoods. After months of collecting data, Reginald and his staff launched an anti-blight campaign, held town meetings, worked with the company's leaders to implement a "Good Neighbor Policy" that would ensure community involvement, and advocated for stronger regulations via local elected officials.

Unfortunately, the company had begun its own campaign, and within a year had effectively dismantled attempts by SMA and South Memphis residents to command a greater voice in protecting their community against environmental pollution. Although a blow, the experience taught valuable lessons and led to SMA refocusing its structure and efforts.

By 2005 SMA purchased its present facility on S. Bellevue, in in the heart of South Memphis. With over ten affiliate neighborhood associations as members, SMA turned toward the social ills that plague so many urban communities: substance abuse, dysfunctional families, and social diseases.

In 2006 SMA received a 5-year grant from the Department of Children's Services to support the agency's work. The next year the organization purchased a sorely neglected Laundromat as its first social entrepreneurial project. Neighborhood residents needed the laundry services, and SMA recognized that while patrons waited for their clothes, their time could be served through connections to relevant social services. The **SMA Family Laundry** on S. Bellevue maintains kiosks where non-profit and governmental agencies can provide information and even set up satellite services.
In 2008 SMA was awarded a renewable grant from the Tennessee Department of Mental Health to expand its **Stand By Me** efforts around substance abuse prevention.

In 2009 SMA launched the **Dream Seekers Initiative** after being selected by the Department of Children's Services to head efforts around improving the lives of young people transitioning from foster care. Based on the success of the initiative, First Tennessee Bank donated a 20,000 square foot facility that will become the **SMA Youth Opportunity Center (YoC!)**. Once the appropriate capital has been secured, the YoC! will provide a healthy environment where young people can hang out, seek career assistance and even find temporary housing.

SMA has also launched a capital campaign to build a new **Center for Families and Children**, located at the entrance to the historic Soulsville neighborhood, which will allow the organization to expand its social services.

In 2010 SMA added to its annual **Unity Dinner** – which celebrates the work of affiliate associations – the **Elbert Rich Memorial Award for Civicness** in honor of a lifelong community organizer who tragically passed away at the age of 37.

In 2011 SMA received funds through the Shelby County Office of Early Childhood and Youth, for the Shelby County Teen Pregnancy and Parenting Support Project (TPPS) for its Hope Chest Initiative and "baby store".

SMA is one of the most unique community based agencies in the City of Memphis. Its close connection with urban residents creates a level of trust and interaction rarely seen between an agency and the community.

SMA Core Services
Foster care advocacy, mentoring, HIV/AIDS education and testing, substance abuse prevention, anger management & goal setting, financial education, and teen pregnancy & parenting support services.

Local Partnerships
Tennessee Department of Children's Services, Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, Shelby County Office of Early Childhood and Youth, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, First Tennessee Bank, Black Rose Foundation for Children, Memphis CARES, JustCare Family Network, The Women's Foundation, The Assisi Foundation, and Memphis/Shelby County Government.

Successes

- We have successfully graduated 62 participants, many of which are continuing to participate via youth leadership board meetings and other youth engagement activities. One of our original Opportunity Passport™ participants works part time as our Youth Services Coordinator.

- We have added additional resources for young people currently or formerly in foster care through our partnership with the Shelby County Office of Early Childhood & Youth's Teen Pregnancy & Parenting Support Project! Through this initiative, SMA provides services to young mothers aged 13-19 currently or formerly in foster care. Among the services provided is that of early success coaching, referrals and a baby store that operates on a voucher system to encourage young mothers to participate in healthy options for successful outcomes. This initiative was recently kicked off with the grand opening of the 4 incentive-based Baby Stores in the Memphis area. Bringing the Hope Chest Baby Store to our building on S. Third Street has enabled us to bring attention to the need to secure funding to develop that site into the Dream Seekers Center!

- Through a program funded by an incentive award from the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development, SMA was chosen as an independent contractor to provide services for our young people in order to target two South Memphis neighborhood zip code areas. As an extension of the Dream Seekers Initiative, 20 of our participants were selected to receive job readiness training provided

by WIN through MIFA. Six have taken advantage of this opportunity and have job placement opportunities within the two South Memphis zip code areas.

- Our partnership with Memphis CARES provides mentors through the Project Advance to 18 Mentoring Project. This project is designed to ensure young people have supportive relationships in place within the community to achieve their personal goals.

- Through the youth leadership board, young people are provided with opportunities to engage with the community on a variety of projects and initiatives.

- We continue to increase our development efforts including the recent hire of a Development Manager. Her main focus is communicating the SMA story and needs of our organization to increase community support.

- We have purchased the abandoned dairy plant that sits across the street from our administration building and have already raised nearly half a million dollars to have it demolished and working toward the future SMA Center for Families and Children. The demolition and construction celebration took place on August 28, 2012. We have also secured funding to completely remodel our Laundromat facility, which will now also serve as a community resource center.

- Through the youth leadership board, several young people have been identified to communicate the message for young people transitioning from foster care and are in the training process.

- Through our continued partnerships with the Tennessee Department of Children's Services, the Shelby County Office of Early Childhood and Youth, Black Rose Foundation, Memphis CARES, Tennessee Workforce Investment Network, and the City of Memphis, SMA is well positioned to sustain our efforts to assist young people in making successful transitions to adulthood.

Challenges & Barriers

Consistent youth participation in the Opportunity Passport™ has been challenging due to ineffective youth engagement practices. Lessons learned have demonstrated the need to increase youth engagement activities throughout the year and prior to offering entry into the Dream Seekers Initiative to improve participant contact.

Next Steps

- SMA is in the process of increasing our Community Partnership Board and garnering additional financial support for youth in care and those exiting care. Sponsorship for IDA matches; stipends/incentives and computer equipment/building space are top priorities.

- A group of five people that include young people is being established as a self-evaluation team.

- Rural West Tennessee and Jackson are in close proximity to Memphis; therefore we have been working with Youth Village's Transitional Living Program and are in the process of expanding our efforts to that area through providing entry into the Dream Seekers Initiative to their young people. We anticipate this arrangement to continue and to grow due to the needs of young people in that area.

Number of Youth Served: 62

Resource Center Report

YTAC Annual Report/Update
Report Completed by: Karen Morgan
Nashville Knoxville **Memphis (bold selection)**

	Previous Year	**Year to Date**
Opportunity Passport™		
Number of new youth enrolled	27	5
# of Financial Literacy Classes offered	16	5
# of Asset Specific Classes offered	0	1
% of youth with favorable post-test outcome	90%	90%
OPPS Surveys		
(April & October only), % of youth completing an OPPS survey		
Community Partnership Boards		
Number of board meetings	8	2
Number of new door openers created	5	15
Life Skills Classes		
Number of life skills classes held	1	1
Total number of participants in life skills classes	10	34
% of youth showing increased proficiency pre to post assessment	unknown	90%
Youth Leadership & Engagement		
Number of youth leadership activities offered	8	3

Appendix D
Programs Working with Transitioning Youth

TRANSITIONAL LIVING

A New Beginning for Young Adults

Youth VILLAGES®
The force for families

PROVIDING CRUCIAL SUPPORT TO YOUNG ADULTS

Children who grow up in the foster care system or in state custody often face a scary and tumultuous transition into adulthood. Studies show that these young people experience much higher than average incidents of homelessness, incarceration, mental illness and drug addiction. For many of these youth, family support is not available, and community support is not sufficient to prepare them for success as independent adults.

A successful transition to adulthood includes maintaining stable and suitable housing, remaining free from legal involvement, participating in an educational/vocational program and developing the life skills necessary to become a successful citizen. Youth Villages' transitional living (TL) program works not only with the youth who are "aging out" but also with their families and support systems to help ensure a more successful transition. The program reduces the risk of homelessness, poverty and illegal behavior among the young adults served.

OUR TRANSITIONAL LIVING SPECIALISTS EMPOWER YOUNG ADULTS

Since 1999, the TL program has helped more than 3,600 former foster youth between the ages of 17-22 make a successful transition into independent adulthood. Participation in the TL program is voluntary. Specially trained TL specialists meet with TL participants at least once a week – and more often when needed – in community settings, including their homes, at school or on the job, at a doctor's office or wherever is most convenient for the youth.

TRANSITIONAL LIVING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Permanency
Young adults in the program learn interpersonal skills to create and maintain healthy personal relationships with family, extended kin, friends and other individuals the youth identifies as important.

Education
Youth Villages supports youth in obtaining at least the minimal education requirements (GED, high school diploma) necessary to maintain employment. The goal is for the young adults to be actively involved in school or to have graduated when leaving the program.

Employment
Young adults in the program secure and maintain employment by point of discharge.

Housing
Young adults in the program will secure and maintain stable and suitable housing.

Independent Living Skills
Young adults in the program improve their independent living skills, such as money management.

Youth Involvement
The young adults in the TL program drive their transition plans and goal development.

YOUTH VILLAGES OFFERS MORE

While there are some programs that serve young adults who have aged out of foster care, these programs are typically office-based and do not provide intensive in-home support and guidance in the community. The Youth Villages TL program provides a comprehensive community-based approach to meeting the needs of young adults. TL specialists are available to young adults 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They make a minimum of one face-to-face contact per week at the youth's home, job or wherever is most convenient for the young person. The number of sessions can be increased based upon the individual needs of each young adult.

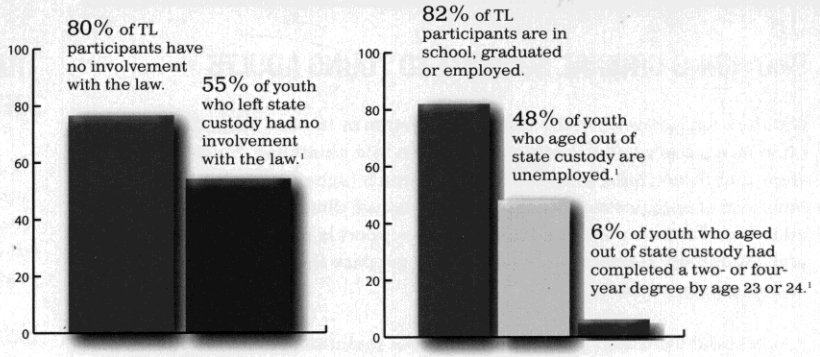
The Youth Villages TL program collaborates with other programs/agencies to provide an intense network of services to the young adults in the program.

YOUTH VILLAGES TRANSITIONAL LIVING

Success at one year post-discharge

33% of youth aging out of state custody will become homeless, according to national estimates.[1]

87% of Youth Villages' TL participants live at home with family or independently.



Transitional living follow-ups conducted at 12 months post-discharge from June 2000 through December 2010; Response Rate: 46.7% (982 out of 2,105)

[1]Courtney, M., Dworsky, A., Cusick, G., Havlicek, J, Perez, A., & Keller, T. (2007) Midwest evaluation of the adult functioning of former foster youth: Outcomes at age 21. Chicago: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.

MORE ABOUT TL

Another unique aspect of Youth Villages' TL program is that the family (or other support system) is considered a vital part of the young adult's path to success. When possible, Youth Villages helps young people reconcile with viable family members. Additionally, TL specialists assist young adults in developing new relationships and lifelong connections with caring adults.

The intensity and comprehensiveness of Youth Villages' transitional living services set this program apart from other services.

Core components that distinguish Youth Villages' TL program and help ensure its success include:

- Low caseloads – Specialists maintain caseloads of about six to eight young adults depending on the intensity of the cases.
- Length of service – Program participation usually lasts from six to 12 months, with an average of seven months.
- Training and supervision – A vital component of the TL program is the level of training and supervision for specialists.
- Accountability – Specialists are expected to achieve success with a high percentage of the young adults — the case outcomes are the specialists' responsibility.
- Collaboration with probation and other agencies – The TL program works closely with other support systems to help ensure consistent and effective services are provided.

TO MAKE A REFERRAL OR FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: www.youthvillages.org

MARY LEE, BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST
Office: 901-251-4934

Youth VILLAGES®
The force for families
www.youthvillages.org

Founded in 1986, Youth Villages has built a national reputation for offering the most effective programs and services to help emotionally troubled children and their families. Headquartered in Memphis, the private nonprofit organization provides a fully integrated continuum of services, including residential and intensive residential treatment, intensive in-home services, treatment foster care and adoption, mentoring, transitional living services and crisis services.

Youth Villages is accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations.

All contents ©2011 by Youth Villages, Inc. with all rights reserved.

TRANSITIONAL LIVING

Tennessee Outcomes

Youth VILLAGES.
The force for families

MATCH AMOUNTS

- Since 2006, DCS has provided nearly $9 million in matching funds for TL services; the agency commits $2,165,000 annually to provide TL services for youth aging out of foster care; Youth Villages more than matches that amount.
- In addition to the DCS grant, in FY11, Youth Villages spent $2,932,000 to support these youth, funded by our employees and other philanthropies.
- In FY12, Youth Villages spent $4,856,000 for transitional living services in Tennessee; increased spending was related to the TL Study such as additional staff to conduct comprehensive assessments on all youth, including those assigned to the community services group.
- After study recruitment is completed in October 2012, Youth Villages spending will return to pre-study levels of matching DCS' contribution.
- Since 1999 The Day Foundation, Youth Villages' employees and partners have contributed more than $20 million to support the TL program in Tennessee; for the first seven years, the program was funded solely through philanthropic support.
- The DCS grant is a critical part of the required match for the Day Foundation's contribution.

AVERAGE LENGTH OF SERVICE

- Median length of service for all Tennessee youth discharged from TL is 203 days.
- Median length of service for those discharged in FY12 is 248 days.
- Nearly half of the youth discharged in FY12 were served between six and 12 months; 11% were served less than 60 days and 14% were served more than 12 months.

TRANSITIONAL LIVING STUDY

- Mark Courtney, the study's principal investigator, stated, "This is one of the largest experimental evaluations ever conducted in the child welfare services field and the largest by far of a program focused on improving the transition to adulthood for foster youth. It will provide invaluable evidence to the field regarding 'what works' for foster youth."
- This will be the first program in the nation to demonstrate positive long-term outcomes for this population; no other program has ever been shown to be effective in producing critical outcomes (housing, education, employment) for transition-age youth.
- DCS is a key partner in the study, providing support in study recruitment and funding services for youth.
- The study will provide a unique opportunity to DCS to examine the long-term impact of post-custody/Extension of Foster Care Services, both with and without TL services.
- Study youth may be served for 18 to 24 months following recruitment (December 2014).

YOUTH SERVED IN TENNESSEE

- 4,737 served July 2000-September 2012
- 1,244 served in FY12
- 673 served in the current fiscal year (through Sept. 30)

YOUTH SERVED BY REGION

YOUTH SERVED	WEST	MIDDLE	EAST
Ever served *(through 9/30/12)*	1,707	1,788	1,391
Served in FY12	343	444	472
Served in current fiscal year *(through 9/30/12)*	197	235	243

Please note: Youth may be served in multiple regions.

- Approximately 54% (226) of youth served on any given day are funded through Youth Villages sources and 46% (262) are funded through DCS.
- Youth Villages has 120 TL staff working from 15 locations serving every county in Tennessee.

SUCCESS

Success is primarily defined as placement at the time of follow-up; Youth Villages tracks three additional primary indicators of success for youth in the TL program, including avoidance of trouble with the law, active engagement in school and/or employment, and avoidance of correctional facility placement.

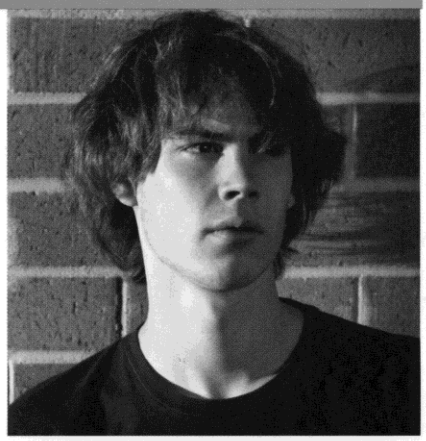
- **86%** of youth served in the TL program discharge home with family or are living independently.

At two years post-discharge:

- **86%** of youth are living with family or independently.
- **77%** of youth report no trouble with the law in the previous year.
- **83%** are in school, graduated or employed.
  - **32%** of youth are in school
  - **41%** are in school and working
  - **10%** are only working
- **10%** reported placement in a correctional facility in the past year.

Specialized Transitional Services

Helping 16 to 21 year olds Prepare for the future



Making the transition from youth to adult hood can be challenging and confusing. Add serious emotional/ behavioral challenges and the experience can be all the more difficult and overwhelming.

That's why MHC offers transitional case management services for clients aged 16-21.

The young adults participating in this program will be actively involved in planning for their future while receiving comprehensive and integrated mental health treatment.

The Transitional Program welcomes referrals of Nashville clients who are 16-21 years old and could benefit from additional support in their transition to adulthood.

Transitional Program clients will receive help with:

- future educational goals
- living skills
- financial/legal/housing needs
- developing knowledge of their illness and the recovery model
- psychiatric medication management
- physical health
- counseling /therapy

MENTAL HEALTH COOPERATIVE

For more information or to make a referral:
(615) 743-1555 or 1-866-816-0433