

Youth Transitions Advisory Council



Annual Report
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<https://www.tn.gov/tccy/ytac/tccy-ytac-youth-transitions-advisory-council-meeting-summaries.html>

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OVERVIEW

In accordance with T.C.A. 37-2-601 – 37-2-606 the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth is pleased to provide the 2019 Annual Report of the Youth Transitions Advisory Council. The Youth Transitions Advisory Council brings dedicated advocates together from all across the state who are developing and implementing new strategies to meet the challenges of engaging former foster youth as they make the critical transition from adolescence to adulthood. This report outlines the work of the Youth Transitions Advisory Council as the members continue to develop strategies to assist these young adults as they prepare for success in the lives ahead of them. Included in this report are ten recommendations for continued improvement in providing services for former foster youth.

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. As we all know from experiences with the young adults in our lives, and as a growing body of research confirms, the human brain continues to grow and develop well past the age of 18. Brain executive functions such as good judgment and understanding the consequences of our actions are among the last to develop, often in the mid-twenties. Additional research shows that trauma and adverse childhood experiences affect the outcomes of many of these young people.

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. Prior to the advent of extension of foster care services, former foster youth often were left to fend for themselves upon aging out of state custody. Estranged from their families, lacking adequate education and social skills, many of these young people found themselves in dire circumstances, unable to meet their daily needs, continue their education, compete for jobs, find suitable housing or access adequate health or mental health care services. Many former foster youth experience homelessness, unplanned pregnancies or have encountered the criminal justice system because they aged out of custody without the proper tools to face the challenges of modern life most adults experience today. Extension of foster care services allows these youth the opportunity to complete or continue their education, with access to health care, housing assistance and other supports to help them succeed in life, while at the same time playing an important role in achieving the goals Tennessee has set for improving graduation rates, increasing educational attainment, building stronger families and creating safer communities.

Youth with behavioral health and substance abuse issues face many of the same barriers to success as they transition from child to adult serving systems. Young people with intellectual and developmental disabilities have additional challenges. Services funded by the Department of Mental Health and Substance Services and TennCare play an important role meeting the needs of these young people.

In FY 2019, 876 young people turned 18 years of age in state custody, of those, 741 were eligible for Extension of Foster Care Services with 332 accepting the services, an uptake rate of 44 percent. Of all the youth eligible for Extension of Foster Care Services who aged out during FY 2019, only three percent of eligible juvenile justice youth accepted Extension of Foster Care Services, while 39 percent of dependent/neglected youth accepted. The percentage of youth adjudicated Unruly who accepted EFCS was two percent.

The average length of stay in Extension of Foster Care Services was 273 days with half of youth exiting after 187 days. The two main reasons for termination of services are youth not maintaining academic eligibility and youth requesting termination of services.

Currently, youth must be working toward completion of their educational goals to participate in Extension of Foster Care Services up to age 21. In FY 2019, 26 DCS affiliated students completed post-secondary education. The number of youth receiving scholarships increased in FY 2019. Two scholarships are available to DCS youth, the federally funded Education and Training Voucher and the state funded Bright Futures Scholarships. In FY 2019, 708 young people received these scholarships, a significant increase over 2018.

The DCS Office of Independent Living coordinates four grand regional Youth 4 Youth Board meetings (two in Grand East) in collaboration with community-based partners. Meeting topics and activities vary from region to region, but all offer a variety of informational presentations by professionals, team building events, public services opportunities, focus group and discussion topics, skill and knowledge training, college tours, and fellowship with other foster youth. DCS has also offered Leadership Academy Camps and experimented with a Day Camp.

Tennessee's Extension of Foster Care Services program currently operates three of the five eligibility criteria outlined in the Fostering Connections guidelines and Tenn. Code Ann. 37-2-417 Tennessee's Transitioning Youth Empowerment Act of 2010: completing secondary education or a program leading to an equivalent credential, enrolled in an institution that provides postsecondary or vocational education or incapable of working or enrolling in an approved academic program due to a medical condition, including a developmental or intellectual condition. In FY 2017, DCS began an analysis project to explore expanding EFC to include the two remaining eligibility criteria, participating in a program or activity designed to promote or remove barriers to employment and employed for at least 80 hours per month. After review of extensive data, DCS executive and senior

staff decided to proceed with privatizing of the Extension of Foster Care Services case management with the goal of expanding the eligibility criteria in the future. Youth Villages' YVLifeSet is now providing case management for the EFCS population, allowing more youth to be served in the program.

Youth Villages' YVLifeSet program is designed to assist young adults between the ages of 17 and 22, who are transitioning from child welfare and juvenile justice services to adulthood, in learning the skills needed to live successfully. YVLifeSet specialists carry a small average caseload of 8-10 and have multiple contacts weekly with each young person in order to engage on a high level. The focal areas of YVLifeSet include permanency, education, employment, housing (through natural supports), basic independent living skills, and engagement. To support youth in their transition to adulthood, the program uses evidence-based interventions and best practices with regards to the following areas: trauma, pregnant/parenting youth, substance abuse issues, physical and mental health, domestic violence, financial literacy and basic independent living skills. In FY 2019, YVLifeSet served about 672 youth daily. A total of 1,575 youth participated in the program and at 12-month follow-up 93 percent were in school, graduated or working, 92 percent were living with family or independently and 91 percent had experienced no trouble with the law

DCS along with community partners provide Resource Centers for the youth in the Extension of Foster Care Services program in Nashville Youth Connections (Monroe Harding), Memphis' Dream Seekers (South Memphis Alliance), Knoxville Project Now (Helen Ross McNabb) and in Chattanooga River City Youth Collective (The Partnership for Families, Children and Adults.) Each Resource Center, though truly unique to their region, provide core services to assist youth: The Opportunity Passport™ financial management classes, high school equivalency prep, post-secondary education planning, assistance with employment, sexual health education and assistance with finding housing.

A significant issue for youth aging out of foster care and all former foster youth is access to affordable housing. Former foster youth make-up one-third to one-half of the homeless population in Tennessee and across the country. The Tennessee Housing and Development Agency has increased its efforts over the years to serve these young people. The THDA strategic plan includes provisions to address the housing needs of youth aging out of foster care. Priority points are added to Tennessee Housing Trust Fund Competitive Grant applications proposing to serve youth aging out of the foster care system. In 2019, TN Housing Trust Fund Competitive Grant awarded to Crossroads Campus a grant totaling \$500,000 for construction of 25 units of rental housing in Nashville. The housing will serve young adults facing homelessness, including individuals who have experienced foster care, juvenile justice, the effects of long-term poverty, and other past traumas. There has also been an increase in the availability of supervised independent living situations in East and Middle Tennessee. However, these programs are lacking in West Tennessee where there is great need.

The Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services currently implements 3 programs addressing the needs of transition age youth: the Tennessee Healthy Transitions Initiative, the First Episode Psychosis Initiative and Tennessee Clinical High Risk for Psychosis Initiative.

The Tennessee Healthy Transitions Initiative is a five-year \$5 million discretionary grant awarded to the TDMHSAS by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) in September 2014. The purpose of the Tennessee Healthy Transitions Initiative is to assist Tennessee youth and young adults with or at risk of developing a serious mental health condition and/or co-occurring disorder in improving their health and wellness, leading self-directed lives, and reaching their full potential. TDMHSAS applied for and obtained a second round of Healthy Transitions funding that began in March 2019 and will continue until March 2024. The new grant, Healthy Transitions: Improving Life Trajectories (HT-ILT) will assist Tennessee youth and young adults ages 16-25 with a serious mental health condition or co-occurring disorders, with a particular focus on co-occurring mental health and intellectual and development disabilities, in maximizing their potential to assume adult roles and responsibilities and lead full and productive lives.

In the FY 2014 appropriation, Congress allocated additional funds to SAMHSA to support “evidence-based programs that address the needs of individuals with early serious mental illness, including psychotic disorders.” States were required to set-aside five percent of their Mental Health Block Grant (MHBG) allocation to support this evidence-based program. The Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS) began planning for the implementation of the five percent set-aside to address early intervention programming as soon as the 2014 budget legislation passed. The proposal approved by SAMHSA included provisions for a First Episode Psychosis (FEP) treatment program to implement in a seven-county area in the northwest corner of Tennessee using a Coordinated Specialty Care model. The program, titled OnTrackTN, serves youth and young adults between the ages of 15-30, who are experiencing psychotic symptoms such as hallucinations, unusual thoughts or beliefs, or disorganized thinking, with symptoms present for more than a week but less than 24 months. Congress increased set aside again in 2016 and 2018 and as a result, OnTrackTN is available in northwest TN, Davidson, Hamilton, Knox and Shelby counties.

The Tennessee Clinical High Risk for Psychosis Initiative is a five-year \$1.6 million discretionary grant awarded to the TDMHSAS by SAMHSA in October 2019. The purpose of the Clinical High Risk for Psychosis (CHR-P) Initiative is to assist Shelby County, Tennessee youth and young adults ages 12 to 25 who are at clinical high risk for developing psychosis to improve symptomatic and behavioral functioning; delay or prevent the onset of psychosis; and minimize the duration of untreated psychosis; enabling them to resume age-appropriate social, academic, and/or vocational activities.

The Youth Transitions Advisory Council and the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth express appreciation to the members of the General Assembly for the opportunity to improve the lives of these young people, and for appropriating much needed funding to the Departments of Children’s Services, Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and the Bureau of TennCare to assist these youth at this critical time in their lives. We hope you will find the resources necessary to continue to fund essential services, so all Tennessee youth have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

The Youth Transitions Advisory Council has made efforts this year to streamline this report to reduce its length and improve its effectiveness. In 2019, a subcommittee of the Council reviewed the recommendations it have provided in previous reports. Many of those recommendations had been addressed in policy, while others are and will remain on-going matters of good practice. The recommendations contained in this report have been reduced from what had grown to a list of 64 to ten. The recommendations include issues members of our Council feel require the assistance of the Administration or General Assembly to resolve.

To reduce the length of the report, The Youth Transitions Advisory Council Meeting Summaries, included in this report in the past, are now available on the TCCY website at the following link:

We hope these efforts will make the report easier to read and less costly to print in order to make the information more broadly available.

Recommendations of the Youth Transitions Advisory Council of 2019

- 1) TennCare should change current practice, and allow youth who age out of foster care to remain on TennCare Select to allow for a seamless transition without disruptive changes in providers and other necessary medical services.
- 2) Tennessee should waive tuition and fees at schools in the state higher education system for youth aging out and for youth in the child welfare system above the age of 16. Youth in foster care or who exit foster care at older ages face challenges meeting their basic needs when attending 2- or 4-year post-secondary programs. Some may be ineligible for Pell Grants and other federal aid due to their placement status while in custody, and Tennessee Promise does not cover tuition at 4-year university programs. Waiving tuition and fees for youth in foster care or ageing out of state custody would provide more opportunities to access higher education for these youth, potentially freeing up funds for other necessary living expenses.
- 3) DCS should expand eligibility criteria for Extension of Foster Care under the Federal Fostering Connections legislation to include youth who are working or engaged in activities that lead to employment. Programs should be promoted that assist these young adults with job readiness and job retention skills.
- 4) If immigration status for youth in foster care is in question, it should be clearly established before their 18th year, prior to leaving custody; immigration status is essential to determining eligibility for certain services. DCS should endeavor to make providers aware of when to ask questions about immigration status, and how that status can impact timely service eligibility.
- 5) Transitioning youth throughout the state need assistance resolving legal issues, including housing, such as leases and evictions; family legal issues, such as child custody or divorce; and potential criminal activities. The Tennessee Bar Association and Access to Justice should establish a pro bono legal services program geared toward 18-24-year-olds who need assistance. Successful models implemented in Tennessee include the Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland's, which provides attorneys to address legal issues for transitioning youth, and the Knoxville Leadership Foundation which assists youth who have been in custody to pursue expungement of misdemeanor charges acquired before the age of 18. Minor offenses on a young adult's juvenile record can present barriers related to education, housing, employment or military service. The Youth Transitions Advisory Council shall organize a Legal Issues Task Force to assess youth legal needs and develop specific recommendations to improve youth outcomes.
- 6) Participation in higher education is a major pathway to success for youth who are or have been in state custody. The Youth Transitions Advisory Council needs active participation

by representatives of TN's higher education system – i.e. Tennessee Higher Education Commission, Tennessee Board of Regents, University of Tennessee and the Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities Association - to promote better understanding and identify strategies to address issues experienced by these young adults. Assisting youth in maintaining academic eligibility is another major concern, since the most likely reason youth become ineligible for Extension of Foster Care Services is due to academic ineligibility.

- 7) Services provided in the Resource Centers for transitioning youth must reach underserved areas too. As described in Tennessee Code Annotated 37-2-603, the Resource Centers that currently exist in Chattanooga, Knoxville, Memphis and Nashville provide a “one-stop shop” for foster youth and former foster youth. When assistance with continuing education, financial literacy, job search and life skills are provided in one place, it helps youth stay engaged and ensures that more of their needs are met. Resource Centers and the services they provide are needed in the more underserved areas of Tennessee. DCS and the Resource Centers should continue to explore the use of technology and other strategies to provide these core supports and services in underserved rural regions of the state.
- 8) Access to transportation is one of the most significant barriers for transitioning youth. Youth Villages has had donations of automobiles to support youth and youth at some Resource Centers have used matching funds from Opportunity Passports to purchase automobiles. Some programs have offered bus passes to transitioning youth. Other creative strategies need to be identified. The Youth Transitions Advisory Council shall organize a Transportation Task Force to identify specific needs and possible solutions toward the goal of making more complete recommendations.
- 9) A mechanism is needed for continuing judicial oversight for youth who were in custody in another state and are now in Tennessee, and otherwise eligible for receipt of Extension of Foster Care Services. This issue has been referred to the Administrative Office of the Court's Court Improvement Project for discussion. This may require an amendment to TN state law.
- 10) The Youth Transitions Advisory Council is made up of many different private and state agencies and entities working with and supporting youth as they face a major life transition –aging out of the foster care or other child-focused system and moving into the responsibilities and expectations of adulthood. We recognize that these transitions can bring added barriers for certain segments of the youth population – those with disabilities, those in the LGBTQ+ community, those with behavioral health needs and those who are undocumented or have uncertain citizenship status. The goal of the Youth Transitions Advisory Council is to be welcoming and inclusive to all youth, and to always be particularly sensitive to the unique challenges that these youth face.

TENNESSEE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Activities and/or programs being undertaken by the Tennessee Housing Development Agency to address the housing needs of youth aging out of foster care include the following:

Tennessee Housing Trust Fund Competitive Grant

Awards were made to these agencies providing housing for youth aging out of foster care:

- *2012 TN Housing Trust Fund Competitive Grant to Omni Community Services, Inc.* The grant was originally awarded to provide 12 housing units, on a statewide basis, for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The homes acquired under the grant are single-family three or four bedroom units and are occupied by three or four persons per home.

Omni Community Services works with special needs persons of all ages, including youth involved in the foster care system. A request was made to expand the scope of the grant to provide housing for youth aging out of foster care. Two units in Davidson County were provided for youth aging out of foster care. Each home has the capacity to serve up to four youth. The Housing Trust Fund grant and agency funds were used to acquire each of the properties. The grant amount utilized for the homes for youth was \$154,000.

The project was completed in December 2015.

- *2014 TN Housing Trust Fund Competitive Grant to the Crossville Housing Authority for new construction of a four-plex of one bedroom apartments for youth aging out of foster care in Crossville.* The grant amount was \$136,050. The units are located in walking distance or close proximity to post-secondary educational institutions, medical facilities, grocery stores, restaurants, discount stores and the Tennessee Career Center.

Youth residing in the apartments receive case management and supervised independent living services from the Department of Children's Services. Services may include job placement assistance, vocational assessments, self-sufficiency skill training and transitional living services. The project was constructed on property already owned by the housing authority, and it was funded by the TN Housing Trust Fund grant, a zero percent loan made possible through the THDA/Tennessee Department of Revenue Community Investment Tax Credit Program, agency funds, and donations.

Tenants receive Section 8 rental assistance and a homeless priority. The tenants also receive a living allowance through the Department of Children's Services, and some are employed. The project is complete and is fully occupied.

- *2015 TN Housing Trust Fund Competitive Grant to Crossroads Campus for six beds of transitional housing for youth aging out of foster care and other at risk*

youth facing poverty and homelessness in Nashville. The program is a pet retail social enterprise providing job training for disadvantaged youth and adoptions for homeless dogs and cats at risk of euthanasia. Earned revenues from the pet shop help to sustain the program. The grant amount was \$159,877.

The project was funded by the TN Housing Trust Fund grant and private funds raised through fundraising efforts. The project was completed in March 2016.

- *2016 TN Housing Trust Fund Competitive Grant to Keystone Development, Inc. for the development of 12 one-bedroom apartments in Johnson City.* The grant was for Phase 1 of the Baker Street Apartments development. Six of the apartments were set aside for homeless youth, many of whom will have aged out of foster care. The other six units were set aside for seniors who will serve as mentors and role models for the youth.

The units were developed in partnership with the Department of Children's Services and Youth Villages. The partner agencies are providing financial assistance and case management. The grant amount was \$500,000. Other sources of funding in this project include a Federal Home Loan Bank grant award, a bank loan, and a Johnson City HUD HOME grant.

The project was completed in August 2017.

- *2017 TN Housing Trust Fund Competitive Grant to Keystone Development, Inc. for the development of 12 apartments in Johnson City.* This is Phase 2 of the Baker Street Apartments development under which Keystone was awarded a 2016 TN Housing Trust Fund grant. Three units were set aside for homeless youth many of who will have aged out of foster care. Nine units were set aside for seniors.

The units were developed in partnership with the Department of Children's Services and Youth Villages. The partner agencies will provide financial assistance and case management.

Completion is anticipated by November 2017. The grant amount was \$500,000. Other sources of funding in this project include a Federal Home Loan Bank grant award.

- *2017 TN Housing Trust Fund Competitive Grant to the Franklin Housing Authority for the rehabilitation of the 22 unit Park Street Apartments development in Franklin.* The rehabilitation of Park Street Apartments represents the third site of the Franklin Housing Authority's Master Redevelopment Plan. One unit will be set aside for youth aging out of foster care. The grant amount was \$500,000. Other sources of funding in the project include a Federal Home Loan Bank grant award, A TN Department of Environment and Conservation grant award, and a loan from Pinnacle Bank utilizing the THDA/Department of Revenue Community Investment Tax Credit Program.
- *2018 TN Housing Trust Fund Competitive Grant to Woodbine Community Organization for the development of two shared living residences that will provide 16 single room occupancy units in Nashville.* Each resident in the shared

living project will have an accessible bedroom and private bath and will share the kitchen, living, dining, and laundry areas. The project also includes two SRO units for live-in caregivers. The grant amount was \$500,000. Woodbine Community Organization has partnered with Monroe Harding for the provision of onsite services to include continued education, vocational training and life skills. Other sources of funding include owner equity being provided by Woodbine.

- *2018 TN Housing Trust Fund Competitive Grant to Case Management Inc. for the rehabilitation of 8 units of housing in Memphis.* Two units will be set aside for youth aging out of foster care. Other populations to be served include homeless adults and veterans. The grant amount was \$210,515.
- *2019 TN Housing Trust Fund Competitive Grant to Crossroads Campus for construction of 25 units of rental housing in Nashville.* The housing will serve young adults facing homelessness, including individuals who have experienced foster care, juvenile justice, the effects of long-term poverty, and other past traumas. The grant amount was \$500,000.

2014 Emergency Solutions Grants to the following youth serving agencies for rapid re-housing, street outreach, and funds for the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).

- Monroe Harding in Nashville. The grant amount was \$36,615 for rapid re-housing activities.
- Oasis Center in Nashville. The grant amount was \$63,385 for street outreach, rapid re-housing, and funds for the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).

Strategic Planning

The THDA strategic plan includes provisions to address the housing needs of youth aging out of foster care. Priority points are added to Tennessee Housing Trust Fund Competitive Grant applications proposing to serve youth aging out of the foster care system.

THDA also included a session on “Housing the Hard to Serve” during the 2017 Governor’s Housing Conference. In an effort to encourage the development of more housing for youth aging out of foster care, panel members presented strategies utilized in successfully developing housing for youth aging out of Tennessee’s foster care system.

DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Youth Transitions Advisory Council Data

Strategies to access and track effectiveness of Extension of Foster Care services and the operation of the Resource Centers

The Tennessee Department of Children's Services (DCS) provides Chafee Foster Care Independent Living Program services through the Office of Independent Living Program (IL) which also monitors and implements the provisions of Extension of Foster Care Services (EFCS). As a part of the federal mandate, IL is charged with building a network of appropriate supports and services for youth transitioning out of care and for those who are likely to remain in care. The primary objectives of Tennessee's service network include:

- helping to ensure youth build connections with caring adults;
- developing youth to be productive individuals within their communities;
- assisting youth with acquisition and maintenance of gainful employment;
- supporting youth through their achievement of educational/vocational goals; and
- providing opportunities for financial assistance and skill development for DCS youth and exiting young adults.

Any youth, including those of Native American heritage, who have been or were in the custody of DCS and who meet eligibility criteria as outlined in policy, have the opportunity to request and access IL services.

The Department's goal is to provide each young person in foster care, age 14 or older, with supports, services, experiences, and opportunities that are individualized, based on the strengths and needs of each individual youth and their families, important to healthy adolescent development, and to help the youth successfully transition to adulthood. Strengths and needs of a 14-year-old who is four years from legal independence are generally different from those of a 16 or 17-year-old who is facing the imminent assumption of adult rights and responsibilities. The planning and provided services for these youth must be tailored on that basis.

DCS uses Chafee Foster Care Independent Living Program funds to staff 16 Independent Living Program Specialists (ILPS), within each region of the state. The DCS ILPS work directly and collaboratively with Family Service Workers (FSW), foster parents, contracted providers, youth and the general public. They are responsible for local program coordination, service delivery, community resource development and ongoing consultation to agency staff, foster parents and youth. Although the primary function of the ILPS is to provide support and technical assistance to staff and resource adults, they also provide direct services and support to youth and young

adults through life skills training classes, processing of the Independent Living Allowance, assistance with securing financial aid (FAFSA), the federal Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) and other scholarship applications, and support and coordination of local statewide youth leadership boards and other leadership activities.

Ongoing program purposes for the Office of Independent Living include:

- Help youth likely to age out of foster care successfully transition to adulthood and self-sufficiency by providing supportive services;
- Help youth likely to age out of foster care receive the education, training and services necessary to obtain gainful employment;
- Help youth likely to age out of foster care prepare for and enter post-secondary training and educational institutions;
- Provide personal and emotional support to youth aging out of foster care through mentorship opportunities and the promotion of interactions with dedicated adults;
- Provide financial, housing, counseling, employment, education and other appropriate support and services to former foster care recipients between 18 and 21 years of age to complement their own efforts to achieve self-sufficiency and to assure that program participants recognize and accept their personal responsibility for preparing for and then making the transition into adulthood;
- Provide leadership opportunities for youth in care to advocate for system changes and improvements, build a network of peer support and bring youth voice and authentic engagement to entities that create and implement youth-centered programming;
- Improve quality practice of EFCS case workers through summits, trainings and on the ground support/coaching.

The Department of Children's Services continues to be committed to data-driven decision making. DCS continued to measure specific variables over the past fiscal year, which is reflected in this report.

Transitional Survey Results of Youth Exiting Custody

DCS is committed to ensuring 90 percent or more of youth who age out of custody at 18 have at least one of the following apply at the time of emancipation:

- earned a GED/HiSet,
- graduated from high school,
- enrolled in high school or post-secondary program.

Youth with special needs who age out must be currently enrolled in a vocational training program or employed full time.

DCS compiled survey results of all youth who aged out of care between January 1, 2019 and June 30, 2019. Out of the 294 Dependent/Neglected/Unruly youth, 91 percent met one or more of the outlined criteria.

DCS will continue to promote educational opportunities for youth in custody and those who leave custody at an older age. During FY 2019, 395 custodial youth and young adults obtained high school diplomas or high school equivalency diplomas (HiSet). A total 272 custody youth graduated with a high school diploma or received a high school equivalency diploma (HiSet); 226 received a high school diploma and 46 a HiSet, One hundred thirty (130) of those custodial students received a regular high school diploma from a DCS affiliated school. Fifty-six (56) of these were earned at the Youth Development Center; 37 earned a high school diploma and 19 earned a HiSet. Another 60 custodial students received a high school equivalency diploma (HiSet) after being approved to test by the DCS Education Division. One hundred twenty-three adults receiving Extension of Foster Care Services obtained a high school diploma (109) or HiSet (14).

The collaborative between the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS), Davidson County Juvenile Court, and the Department of Children's Services' (DCS) Central Office staff & Davidson County Regional staff entitled Project Wrap Around continued during FY 2019. The goal of the project is to increase timely high school graduation rates, matriculation, retention rates, and attainment of post-secondary certificates or degrees among the 14 - 21 population in foster care. This is currently a pilot project that includes youth in DCS custody via Davidson County court commitment, and any Extension of Foster Care young adults enrolled in an MNPS. It is hoped that intensified efforts to assist students with credit consolidation and recovery, IEP development and implementation, and ongoing tracking and support will increase secondary graduations rates, post-secondary enrollment and improved post-secondary success.

In FY 2019, 26 DCS affiliated students completed post-secondary education. The following represent the post-secondary programs completed.

Non EFCS

- Austin Peay State University
- Freed-Hardeman University
- Independence University
- Jackson State Community College
- Middle Tennessee State University
- Southwest Community College
- Tennessee College of Applied Technology

EFCS

- Chattanooga State Community College-TCAT
- Dyersburg State Community College
- Genesis Career College
- Middle Tennessee State University
- Pellissippi State Community College
- Tennessee College of Applied Technology
- Tennessee State University
- Volunteer State Community College
- William R. Moore College of Technology

Educational caregiver/advocacy efforts include attending educational meetings, consulting with DCS staff, resource parents and schools, as well as providing educational training to departmental personnel and schools. From July 1, 2018, through June 30, 2019, the Education Division provided consultation to Child and Family Teams, field services worker (FSWs), and public/non-public schools over 41,200 times. Education staff participated directly in over 2,100 Child and Family Team Meetings and more than 1,200 Individual Education Plan (IEP)/504 Meetings. Additionally, the Education Specialists advocated for students in more than 130 disciplinary hearings and in 130 specialized foster care review board meetings. Staff also provided 207 educational training sessions for nearly 2200 surrogate parents, resource parents, FSWs, and school staff.

Both the YDC and the provider in-house schools provide a full high school curriculum that leads to a regular high school diploma. Opportunities for credit recovery, self-paced learning and mastery learning are also made available. In instances where students leave the YDC or a provider in-house school prior to completing graduation requirements, there are 15 Education Specialists across the state (at least one in each DCS region) who help students transition back into public schools or into adult education programs in order to finish their course work and earn a regular high school diploma. DCS staff, provider in-house schools and public schools are trained to consult these Education Specialists to assist in the transition process.

Students who are educated in provider in-house schools and in our YDC who are significantly behind in credits based and are at least 17 years old are provided the opportunity to earn a High School Equivalency Diploma by passing an exam called HISET. The decision to allow a student this option for obtaining a high school credential is made by the Child and Family Team (CFT). A High School Equivalency Exam Recommendation form (formerly referred to as a waiver) is submitted for students who are approved by the CFT. Wilder, the last remaining YDC, is able to prepare and administer the HISET to their students on-site. Currently, students in provider in-house schools must be transported off site to take the exam; however, the DCS Education Division and the Department of Labor and Workforce Development are working together in hopes of providing on-site HISET testing at these schools in the future. Mountain View Academy for Young Men is now a HISET computer based test center and the pilot was phased out when the last paper-based test administration by the local adult education volunteer occurred in August 2019. There are several provider in-house schools that are also in the application process of becoming HISET test sites. This project is now in the final phase of implementation across the state. Our hope is that this will allow a significant number of students to leave custody with the opportunity to pursue a post-secondary education, enroll in vocational training programs, or enter the workforce.

The Office of Independent Living (IL) is focused on ensuring education remains a major focus in transition planning to help young people meet their educational goals. Both IL and Education encourage young people to advocate for their education in order to be successful in their future

educational endeavors, and get involved in school programs, including TN Promise, that help support their educational well-being.

The National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) collects information on youth in foster care (via a survey) who are 17 years of age, including sex, race, ethnicity, date of birth, and foster care status. It also collects information about the outcomes of those youth at that time and then when a sample of the youth who completed surveys turn ages 19 and 21.

TN DCS utilizes the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) data to help understand the circumstances of our transition aged youth. The most recent NYTD submission contains survey data for young adults who turned age 19 during the survey period currently receiving Extension of Foster Care, or formerly in foster care, collected October 1, 2018 to March 31, 2019. This is a partial year's submission and included the following data:

- 69 of 100 youth participated in the NYTD 2019A 19-year-old follow-up survey
- 26 reported as Unable to Locate/Invite
- 94 percent of participating 19-year-olds reported having connections to an adult
- 15 percent participating 19-year-olds reported having children
- 14 percent of participating 19-year-olds reported homelessness during the past two years
- 28 percent of participating 19-year-olds reported incarceration during the past two years

National statistics for this sample population are not yet available, because the entire two data submission periods have not been completed.

EFC Criteria Expansion Project

Tennessee's EFC program currently operates three of the five eligibility criteria outlined in the Fostering Connections guidelines and Tenn. Code Ann. 37-2-417 Tennessee's Transitioning Youth Empowerment Act of 2010:

- Completing secondary education or a program leading to an equivalent credential;
- Enrolled in an institution that provides postsecondary or vocational education; and
- Incapable of working or enrolling in an approved academic program due to a medical condition, including a developmental or intellectual condition.

In FY 2017, DCS began an analysis project to explore expanding EFC to include the two remaining eligibility criteria:

- Participating in a program or activity designed to promote or remove barriers to employment and
- Employed for at least 80 hours per month.

DCS partnered with representatives from the Jim Casey Youth Initiative (JCYI) and Main Spring (MC) consulting to analyze the fiscal and programmatic impact expanding the program would have. This expansion would not only impact the Office of Independent Living but would involve expansion of services, supports and policy/protocol for Divisions of Adoption and Permanent Guardianship, Juvenile Justice, Foster Care, Placement and others. DCS, JCYI and MS spent the beginning of 2017 gathering information in preparation for a large planning meeting with DCS executive and regional staff in August to frame the direction for this analysis project. Primarily, the analysis will report on fiscal impact, but through planning and discussion leading up to the August meeting, it was decided to include programmatic impacts on policy and protocol changes.

In preparation for the August meeting, two sets of feedback were collected. The first was an online survey for EFC regional and IL CO staff on the current program and potential expansion and the second was a series of three focus group meetings with current and former foster youth in Memphis, Nashville and Knoxville. In total, 33 youth between the ages of 16-21 participated. Youth were asked to provide feedback about the current EFC program and areas they would like to see improvement. Some highlights consistent across all three groups were youth felt supported by their case managers and stated desire to meet with and connect more with them. Youth felt the biggest need was more housing options. Information collected was processed and used to inform discussion throughout the August meeting.

During FY 2018 DCS compiled a significant amount of data for the fiscal and program analysis around several different program expansion prototypes. The draft analysis was completed and a second meeting with DCS executive and senior staff in June 2018 to review results and discuss finalizing the report. The report was finalized in November 2018 and DCS executive and senior staff decided to proceed with the privatizing of the EFC case management with the goal of expanding the eligibility criteria thereafter.

Strategies for maintaining accurate numbers of young adults served by Extension of Foster Care

In addition to using TFACTS data, Independent Living Program Specialists maintain data that demonstrates overall provision of Extension of Foster care services via monthly reports that are 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 are derived from TFACTS system records. Data related to IL staff participation in CFTMs, and training provided by such staff, is tracked manually. The number of services provided by the Department of Children's Services

Services Available to Youth in State Custody and Those Who Receive Extension of Foster Care Services

- Post-Secondary Application Fees
- Testing Fees (SAT, ACT, GED)
- Tutoring
- Educational fees
- Independent Living Class Stipend (to Support Life Skills Instruction)
- Graduation Package
- Yearbooks
- Membership/Activity Fees for Extracurricular or Leadership Activities
- Senior Event-Related Transportation
- Honor/Senior Class Trip (School Related Activity)
- Housing Application/Fees for Post Custody
- Materials/Uniforms for Vocational Studies
- Completion of Job Readiness Training
- Job Start-Up Costs
- Driver's Education Class Fees
- Driver's Testing Fees
- Car Insurance
- Transportation Grant
- Car Repairs
- Housing Related Fees
- Tools/Equipment (Technical/Vocational Programs)
- Other Special Needs Unique to Youth Services
- Child Care Assistance
- Youth Leadership Stipend
- Independent Living Allowance
- Educational and Training Voucher (Scholarship)
- Bright Futures (State Funded) Scholarship
- YVLifeSet
- Opportunity Passport™ (per the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative) - Provided Via the Resource Centers
- Placement Services
- Case Management
- Household Furnishings

Source: Tennessee Department of Children's Services – TFACTS

The number of young adults who received these services during FY 2018-2019 and length of stay in EFCS.

TN DCS provides youth aging out of state custody services through multiple sources. This is based on their eligibility, and services are provided by TN DCS as well as through TN DCS contracts with private providers and community agencies.

Services Provided

- YVLifeSet: 1546 (1049 DCS Grant, 660 privately funded; some youth received services via both funding streams, not simultaneously, at some point during FY 2019).
- Extension of Foster Care Services: 746 Individuals/762 EFCS Episodes.

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

FY 2019 EFCS Retention: Days in EFCS

In FY 2019, the mean (days) were 273 days, median (days) were 187, which is slightly up from last year. In FY 2018, the mean (days) were 271 days, median (days) were 179. DCS will continue to evaluate supports needed to increase retention of youth in Extension of Foster Services. TN IL does know that the two main reasons for termination of services are youth not maintaining academic eligibility and

Region	Mean (Days)	Median (Days)	Mode (Days)
Northwest	351	150	148
Southwest	287	181	0
Shelby	389	252	1,096
Davidson	289	191	0
Mid Cumberland	271	212	429
South Central	255	154	0
Upper Cumberland	259	182	0
Northeast	259	239	0
Knox	253	205	88
East	266	178	56
Smoky Mountain	185	114	78
Tennessee Valley	242	214	60
Total (Days)	273	187	1,096

youth requesting termination of services. It is hoped that efforts such as Project Wraparound will result in increased retention rates based on continuation of educational plans.

Program Exits

The following represent the circumstances by which young adults leave extended foster care that are captured for reporting purposes during FY 2019:

- Academic Ineligibility;
- Risk to Self or Others (example: committing a violent crime, which is in violation of the Rights and Responsibilities Agreement young adults sign when accepting extension of foster care services);
- Voluntary Termination of Services (Self Termination);
- Successful Completion of Educational Program;
- Transition to Adult Services;
- Turned age 21; and
- Unable to Locate.

Region	No Academic Eligibility	Risk to Self or Others	Self	Completion of Education Program	Transition to Adult Services	Turned Age 21	Unable to Locate	Total
Davidson	19	0	5	1	3	3	0	31
East	13	0	11	2	2	2	3	33
Knox	0	1	24	0	5	1	0	31
Mid Cumberland	19	1	15	1	2	4	11	53
Northeast	13	2	4	0	3	0	3	25
Northwest	7	0	4	5	0	2	0	18
Shelby	30	1	4	1	6	6	2	50
Smoky Mtn	15	3	20	5	2	1	0	46
South Central	15	1	5	1	3	3	2	30
Southwest	12	0	4	1	4	2	0	23
TN Valley	27	1	8	1	6	1	0	44
Upper Cumberland	23	0	5	6	4	2	0	40
Total	193	10	109	24	40	27	21	424

The primary support service offered to young adults who exit EFCS is YVLifeSet. YVLifeSet continues working with the youth after EFCS end and can assist working with the youth to re-establish EFCS, depending on the reason for exiting. Youth who exit for academic reasons can work a viable education plan to get back on track and eligible for EFCS before they turn 21. Other services available to youth who exit to adult services that have and established SSI qualification could receive mental health and behavioral health services in coordination with the state's Medicaid Waiver program, TennCare, or services through the state's Employment and Community First/Project Transitions program.

One-hundred twenty-three young adults did complete their high school diploma (109) or HiSet (14) while receiving EFCS in FY 2019, but may be categorized as another exit type due to furthering their education or self-termination. These young adults successfully completed one aspect of their education but exited without completing their entire goals such as proceeding to or maintaining post-secondary education.

The number of youth who exited state custody and received scholarship assistance from DCS to continue into post-secondary educational programs during FY 2018-2019.

The Department offers young adults who were in foster care or who are in foster care on their 18th birthday the opportunity to continue to receive a variety of supports and services beyond age 18 to help them successfully transition to adulthood. The Department of Children’s Services is the sole administrator of Education and Training Vouchers. The Office of Independent Living has a Scholarship Administrator who manages the ETV funds available and State Funded Scholarship. ETV applicants are required to provide documentation of total cost of attendance and the financial aid package for the programs they are enrolled in to the Scholarship Coordinator who reviews this information and establishes ETV awards accordingly.

DCS is able to provide an unduplicated number of ETVs awarded each year. The program will continue looking at ways to maximize the impact of funding and involving communities and individual colleges and universities in providing increased opportunities for this population. Data is currently being reviewed to help determine fluctuations in ETV awards, identifying the factors affecting this to inform strategies for maximizing utilization. The Bright Futures State Funded Scholarship awarded through the Governor’s Office will continue in the coming year, and \$500,000 is the amount the state legislature has allocated toward this program.

There was an overall increase in the number of scholarships provided during FY 2019.

Post-Secondary Institution	2019			2018		
	ETV	State	Total	ETV	State	Total
Tennessee 4-Year University	106	46	152	71	35	106
Tennessee Community Colleges	263	81	344	210	67	277
Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology	79	10	89	56	17	73
University of Tennessee System	35	19	54	25	11	36
Private 4-Year Colleges	36	0	36	28	0	28
Non State Technical Colleges	33	0	33	21	0	21
Total	552	156	708	411	130	541

Source: Independent Living Scholarship Report

Number of EFCS young adults served in FY 2019 broken down by adjudication, gender, race/ethnicity, and region/county.

Region	Number
Davidson	65
East Tennessee	48
Knox	47
Mid Cumberland	100
Northeast	49
Northwest	32
Shelby	84
Smoky Mountain	75
South Central	53
Southwest	36
TN Valley	78
Upper Cumberland	79
Total	746

Total Individuals Served: 746

Adjudication (at time exiting DCS custody)

- Dependent/Neglected: 639
- Unruly: 33
- Delinquent: 74

Gender

- Female: 429
- Male: 317

Source: Tennessee Department of Children's Services – TFACTS

Race	Number Served
American Indian/Alaska Native	1
American Indian/Alaska Native, Black/African American	1
Asian	3
Asian, White	1
Black/African American	222
Black/African American, Multi-Racial - One Race Unknown	3
Black/African American, Multi-Racial - One Race Unknown, White	1
Black/African American, White	33
Multi-Racial - One Race Unknown	3
Multi-Racial - One Race Unknown, White	2
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	1
Unable to Determine	2
White	473
Total	746
Ethnicity	Number Served
Hispanic/Latino	41
Not Hispanic/Latino	684
Unknown	21
Total	746

County	Number of EFCS Episodes	Number of Young Adults Served	County	Number of EFCS Episodes	Number of Young Adults Served
Anderson	17	17	Lauderdale	5	5
Bedford	3	3	Lawrence	12	12
Bledsoe	1	1	Lewis	2	2
Blount	20	19	Lincoln	3	3
Bradley	14	14	Loudon	4	4
Campbell	6	6	Macon	9	9
Carter	5	5	Madison	9	9
Cheatham	3	3	Marshall	5	5
Chester	1	1	Maury	6	6
Claiborne	9	8	McMinn	7	7
Clay	2	2	Meigs	3	3
Cocke	4	4	Monroe	5	4
Coffee	4	4	Montgomery	16	16
Crockett	4	4	Morgan	3	3
Cumberland	9	8	Obion	2	2
Davidson	67	65	Overton	4	4
Decatur	1	1	Perry	2	2
DeKalb	4	4	Putnam	15	15
Dickson	3	3	Rhea	8	8
Dyer	1	1	Roane	4	4
Fayette	3	2	Robertson	6	6
Fentress	3	3	Rutherford	24	24
Franklin	8	8	Scott	6	6
Gibson	11	11	Sequatchie	2	2
Giles	5	5	Sevier	15	15
Grainger	4	3	Shelby	85	84
Greene	15	15	Smith	14	13
Hamblen	12	12	Stewart	7	7
Hamilton	44	43	Sullivan	12	12
Hardeman	2	2	Sumner	13	13
Hardin	4	4	Tipton	5	5
Hawkins	6	6	Union	4	4
Haywood	3	3	Warren	11	11
Henderson	4	4	Washington	11	11
Henry	1	1	Wayne	2	2
Hickman	2	2	Weakley	2	2
Humphreys	1	1	White	5	5
Jackson	5	5	Williamson	14	13
Jefferson	15	14	Wilson	27	24
Knox	47	47	Total	762	746

The following describes the number of youth who received independent living wraparound services in FY 2018-19.

Independent Living Wraparound Services Custodial Population 2018-19

Service	Instances of Service Provided 2016-17	Instances of Service Provided 2017-18	Instances of Service Provided 2018-19	Youth Served 2016-17	Youth Served 2017-18	Youth Served 2018-19	Expenditure 2016-17	Expenditure 2017-18	Expenditure 2018-19
Drivers Education	47	51	56	47	50	56	\$19,147	\$19,867	\$21,706
Drivers Testing Fees	0	0	1	0	0	1	\$0	\$0	\$20
Extra-Curricular Leadership Activity/Membership Fees	28	47	41	22	41	36	\$3,454	\$7,319	\$10,423
Good Grades Incentive	47	55	41	45	47	36	\$1,830	\$1,950	\$1,590
Graduation Package	140	192	144	95	129	107	\$23,226	\$35,848	\$31,784
Honor/Senior Class Trip	14	15	5	13	14	5	\$1,701	\$2,955	\$958
Housing Application Fees (Post-Secondary)	11	7	2	11	6	2	\$1,365	\$790	\$200
IL Class Stipend	15	22	44	14	22	43	\$475	\$875	\$1,825
Materials for Vocational Studies	1	1	1	1	1	1	\$79	\$800	\$70
Other Special Needs	30	22	22	22	22	21	\$10,851	\$4,563	\$5,638
Post-Secondary Application/Registration Fees	22	7	5	15	7	5	\$910	\$275	\$240
Senior Event Transportation	0	0	1	0	0	1	\$0	\$0	\$25
Educational Fees	2	3	0	2	2	0	\$1,314	\$920	\$0
Testing fees (GED, SAT, ACT)	11	5	4	11	5	4	\$571	\$276	\$249
Tutoring	6	0	0	2	0	0	\$1,758	\$0	\$0
Yearbooks	27	36	18	27	36	18	\$2,018	\$2,968	\$1,502
Youth Leadership Stipend	107	33	42	106	33	42	\$5,025	\$3,100	\$3,675
Total	508	496	427	433	*300	*291	\$73,723	\$82,508	\$79,905

*This represents unduplicated clients; some youth received more than one type of service during FY 2019.

Source: Tennessee Department of Children's Services – TFACTS

Independent Living Wraparound Services Extension of Foster Care Population 2018-19

Service	Instances of Service Provided 2016-17	Instances of Service Provided 2017-18	Instances of Service Provided 2018-19	Youth Served 2016-17	Youth Served 2017-18	Youth Served 2018-19	Expenditure 2016-17	Expenditure 2017-18	Expenditure 2018-19
Auto Insurance	15	32	29	15	30	29	\$4,939.02	\$11,594.99	\$11,072.78
Drivers Education	41	32	26	41	32	26	\$16,059.00	\$12,925.00	\$9,713.00
Drivers Testing Fees	0	0	0	0	0	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Educational Fees	1	1	0	1	1	0	\$500.00	\$153.75	\$0.00
Extra-Curricular Leadership Activity/Membership Fees	12	6	12	11	5	11	\$1,432.50	\$1,010.00	\$2,385.94
Good Grades Incentive	6	4	3	5	2	3	\$270.00	\$120.00	\$150.00
Graduation Package	71	59	61	55	46	47	\$11,483.84	\$11,220.30	\$11,040.86
Honor/Senior Class Trip	10	5	4	10	5	4	\$1,233.00	\$762.00	\$803.00
Household Furnishings	23	17	23	20	14	20	\$12,085.62	\$9,123.46	\$10,576.81
Housing Application Fees (Post-Secondary)	14	10	12	14	10	11	\$1,929.00	\$3,488.13	\$1,957.13
IL Class Stipend	3	1	0	3	1	0	\$150.00	\$50.00	\$0.00
Materials for Vocational Studies	1	1	1	1	1	1	\$86.16	\$120.50	\$592.72
Non-Recurring Housing Start Up	31	43	24	19	25	19	\$16,600.69	\$15,667.48	\$11,695.45
Other Special Needs	32	23	21	30	18	18	\$5,725.75	\$5,399.38	\$3,651.35
Post-Secondary Application/Registration Fees	26	15	8	18	10	8	\$1,145.00	\$983.00	\$585.00
Senior Event Transportation	1	0	0	1	0	0	\$50.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Testing fees (GED, SAT, ACT)	5	2	3	5	2	3	\$381.00	\$194.00	\$320.50
Tools for Vocational School	8	2	3	6	2	3	\$3,962.39	\$1,426.73	\$3,033.35
Transportation Grant	20	19	13	14	15	11	\$1,135.50	\$898.50	\$636.00
Tutoring	0	2	1	0	2	1	\$0.00	\$1,895.00	\$1,000.00
Vehicle Repairs	3	12	14	3	11	14	\$963.00	\$3,400.08	\$5,099.43
Yearbooks	17	11	8	17	11	7	\$1,142.82	\$857.00	\$587.83
Youth Leadership Stipend	41	31	21	27	28	15	\$1,825.00	\$2,175.00	\$1,065.00
Total	381	328	287	316	*187	*162	\$83,099.29	\$83,464.30	\$75,966.15

*This represents unduplicated clients; some youth received more than one type of service during FY 2019.

Source: Tennessee Department of Children's Services – TFACTS

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

The Youth Engagement Lead continues to develop strategies to connect with aged-out youth who did not accept or are unable to continue services. The main reasons young people give for not accepting EFCS continue to be desire to work instead of continue education goals, did not want to be involved with DCS and could not be located. The Office of Independent Living also collected the reasons why youth did not accept EFCS, which reflected the above top reasons. Results were compiled into the statewide table to the right.

Reason	Number	Percent
Academic Ineligibility	94	23%
Could Not be Located	75	18%
Criminal Charges	3	0.7%
EFCS Not Offered	21	5%
Entered Military	2	0.4%
Excessive Countable Resources	1	0.2%
Moved Out of State	31	7%
Refusal	96	23%
Social Security Benefit	26	6%
Transition to Adult Services	12	2%
Uncertain	27	6%
Undocumented	11	2%
Went to Work	10	2%
Total	409	100%

Extension of Foster Care Services Uptake, Total and by Region:

During FY 2019, fewer youth aged out of DCS custody/foster care, and fewer accepted EFCS. Forty-four percent of the total eligible population accepted EFCS, slightly down from last year’s 46 percent. Of those eligible, 39 percent of dependent/neglected youth, two percent of unruly youth and three percent of eligible juvenile justice youth accepted EFCS.

One group that remains less likely to accept EFCS is those who are adjudicated delinquent. Of all those eligible for EFCS in FY 2019, three percent (15 percent within adjudication) of eligible

Region	Aged Out	Aged Out Eligible	Accepted EFCS	% EFCS Uptake
Davidson	82	68	31	46
East	60	54	24	44
Knox	40	36	21	58
Mid Cumberland	98	93	44	47
Northeast	59	55	25	45
Northwest	37	36	11	31
Shelby	147	77	35	45
Smoky Mountain	95	91	39	43
South Central	68	59	19	32
Southwest	40	33	14	42
TN Valley	71	67	34	51
Upper Cumberland	79	72	35	49
Total	876	741	332	44

juvenile justice youth accepted EFCS, compared to 39 percent (53 percent within adjudication) of dependent/neglected youth. The percentage of youth adjudicated Unruly who accepted EFCS was up slightly; two percent overall and 42 percent within adjudication.

Source: Tennessee Department of Children’s Services – TFACTS and Independent Living Monthly Report

Number of young adults receiving Extension of Foster Care Services who were in foster care placement, supervised independent living arrangements and other placements.

- EFC youth in foster care placements at some point during FY 2019: 248
- EFC youth receiving the Independent Living Allowance during FY 2019: 433

EFCS Placement Service FY 2019 (The number of services is higher than the number of young adults served because some young adults received more than one type of service)	Number of Young Adults Per Service
L3 AS-ND RTC Extension of Foster Care	2
Contract Foster Care Extension of Foster Care	125
Extraordinary Rate Extension of Foster Care	1
Regular Board Rate Extension of Foster Care	87
Graduated Rate Extension of Foster Care (IL Allowance)	18
Independent Living Assistance – Parenting (IL Allowance)	45
Regular Rate Extension of Foster Care (IL Allowance)	394
Independent Living Residential Extension of Foster Care	99
L3 AS-ND PRTF HIGH Extension of Foster Care	2
L3 AS-ND PRTF MID Extension of Foster Care	4
L3 SED-PRTF Extension of foster Care	1
L3 SED-PRTF High Extension of Foster Care	1
Level 2 Continuum Extension of Foster Care	22
Level 2 Congregate Care Extension of Foster Care	3
Level 2 SN Continuum Extension of Foster Care	8
Level 2 Special Needs - Mental Retardation Treatment Extension of Foster Care	1
Level 3 Continuum Extension of Foster Care	1
Continuum: Level 3 Special Needs Extension of Foster Care	24
Level 3 Extension of Foster Care	6
Level 4 Special Needs Extension of Foster Care	5
Total Individuals Served	707

The following summarizes the 39 young adults in Extension of Foster Care who did not have a placement service during FY 2019:

- Had an EFCS episode during the Fiscal Year but no EFCS placement: 17
- EFCS episode ended on or after July 1, 2018 and placement service ended on or before July 1, 2018. Last payment was in the fiscal year ending June 30, 2018: 14
- EFCS placements existed during the Fiscal Year but no payment records in a valid reporting status until after July 1, 2018, or at all: 8

Source: Tennessee Department of Children's Services – TFACTS

The Department of Children’s Services continues to be focused heavily on implementation of the federal Fostering Connections Act and Tennessee’s Transitioning Youth Empowerment Act. The Department continues to focus on training efforts, increased outreach to young people; youth engagement to improve practice, increase services (paid and non-paid life skills development); increase housing opportunities and overcoming barriers to serving special populations. Participation by Office of Independent Living staff in Child and Family Team meetings to provide information on independent living services, Extension of Foster Care Services and to assist with the development of Independent Living and Transition Plans is also a focus.

Office of Independent Living staff participated in thousands of Child and Family Team Meetings.

Child and Family Team Meeting Type	Number with Staff Participants	Child and Family Team Meeting Type	Number with Staff Participants
Discharge/Exit Custody	637	JJ - Release to Aftercare	13
Discharge/Exit Extension of Foster Care	197	Permanency (Adoption Only)	1
Extension of Foster Care Progress Review	494	Permanency Plan Revision Custody	233
Extension of Foster Care Services Discharge	1	Placement Stability	40
FSW - Progress Review of Non-Custody	1	Plan Revision (IPP)	13
Individual Program Plan	51	Progress Review Custody	1,058
Initial Custody	68	Quarterly IPP Review	1
Initial Extension of Foster Care	150	Special Called	108
Initial Permanency Plan Custody	183	Transition to Adulthood	485
JJ - Discharge From Probation/Aftercare	1		
JJ - Program Transfer	1	Total	3,736

Source: Independent Living Monthly Report

The Office of Independent Living trained participants in several related agencies or groups.

- Court: 127
- DCS: 376
- Foster Parents: 191
- Provider Agency: 31
- Youth: 447
- Other: 270

Additionally, Independent Living staff assisted with the development of 142 Independent Living Plans and 720 Transition Plans based on manual reporting.

Source: Independent Living Monthly Report

Youth-Involved Advocacy and Engagement Activities

The Youth Engagement Coordinator and other Independent Living Central Office staff handled more than 200 Formstack inquiries submitted via the online transmission form and responded to a high number of phone and in-person referrals. Inquiries on services and resources were matched with local DCS and Central Office staff that connects the youth or person inquiring on the youth's behalf to resources and information in that youth's area. Common resources connected include YVLifeSet, Opportunity Passport, EFCS re-establishments, Community Resource referrals, ETV/Bright Futures Scholarships and even TennCare.

Engaging youth in planning and decision-making regarding their own lives reaps critical benefits throughout the process of transitioning to adulthood. Along with the ongoing transition planning, normalcy and assisting youth in permanency and preparation for adulthoods, DCS and partners work towards creating many youth engagement activities. This section highlights activities involving youth during FY 2019.

The Office of Independent Living continues to coordinate four grand regional Youth 4 Youth Board meetings (2 in Grand East) in collaboration with community-based partners. Meeting topics and activities vary from region to region, but all offer a variety of informational presentations by professionals, team building events, public services opportunities, focus group and discussion topics, skill and knowledge training, college tours, and fellowship with other foster youth.

FY 2019 Meetings

Region	Y4Y meeting	Attendance	Average Attendance
Grand East	12	56	10
Grand Middle	4	28	7
Grand West	11	132	12

Under the federally-funded PREP contracts Leadership Academy Camps continues to be a success. Coordinated by the Harmony Family Center, this two-day event is held at the scenic Camp Montvale in Maryville, Tennessee, where youth participate in a spectrum of events around team building, IL skill development, sexual health and family planning, and fellowship with other foster youth, including ropes courses, wall climbing, equestrian therapy, swimming, hiking, preparing meals, and, of course, campfires and s'mores. This year DCS and Harmony staff created an experimental Day Camp in Franklin, TN that served nearly 20 youth. Feedback from youth and staff was very positive.

Each year the Jim Casey and Annie E. Casey Foundations accept nominations for youth to participate as a Jim Casey Young Fellow. In FY 2019, DCS nominated a youth from TN Valley region that was accepted to be a part of the program. As a Jim Casey Young fellow, this youth represented Tennessee in national meetings and events providing knowledge and insight related

to the needs and experiences of youth transitioning from foster care to adulthood. Some highlighted events participated in included the Youth Leadership Institute, a five-day session that aims to develop youth's leadership and professional development skills and the Jim Casey Fall Convening, a two day convening to share progress on national strategic planning, discuss new approaches to accelerate racial and ethnic equity, inclusion for young people, strategize how to influence and improve policy and practice to advance race equity and inclusion.

New Resources, Services and Other Interesting Updates

In effort to improve Authentic Youth Engagement, DCS created a statewide Leadership Board entitled Young Adult Advisory Council that will serve as the foundation for all youth engagement work throughout the state. The council consists of current and former Extension of Foster Care young adults from across the State of Tennessee.

Chambliss Transitional Living Program is in the process of expanding their program with six additional apartment units. Youth receive a fully-furnished, single-room unit with all utilities paid including internet. Youth also receive a monthly bus pass, weekly allowance for groceries and hygiene items, connections with opportunities at local colleges and trade schools, life skills training and financial management classes.

Nashville's Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency (MDHA) secured a \$3.5 million grant from HUD to address youth homelessness to be served over a two year period. The grant is eligible to be renewed each year after the first two years at \$1.75 million. HUD, the Metro Homeless Impact Division, MDHA, Oasis Center and 22 local partners including DCS worked on the application. This group is currently planning for implementation of the program beginning Fall 2019. Nashville was one of 11 communities to be awarded.

Knoxville Community Development Corporation in Knox County, Chattanooga Housing Authority in Hamilton County, and Memphis Housing Authority in Shelby County were recipients of the Family Unification Program (FUP) vouchers (which included the development of MOUs between HUD, the administering agencies and DCS) to assist youth aging out of foster care & families that need housing to assist with prevention or reunification efforts.

DCS partnered with the Johnson City Housing Authority and Homes for Youth Program. Between DCS and Youth Villages LifeSet, which provides the case management piece, this partnership identifies youth who qualify for a homeless preference. The Johnson City Housing Authority prioritizes DCS youth into one bedroom apartments within their development and has recently received a grant and built brand new apartments in the Johnson City area for those youth who have a homeless preference and have applied for Section 8.

Supervised Independent Living Residential placement options for Extension of Foster Care young adults

- Free Will Baptist Family Ministries in Greeneville, TN accept males.
- Holston Homes for Children in Greeneville, TN accepts both males and females
- Smoky Mountain Children's Home in Sevierville, TN accepts females.
- Partnership for Children, Families, and Adults in Chattanooga, TN accepts males and females. .
- Chambliss Center for Children in Chattanooga, TN accepts both males and females.
- Monroe Harding in Nashville, TN accepts both males and females. They have opened a new housing site with VOCA grant funding and in partnership with Woodbine Community Organization.
- Omni Visions in Nashville, TN accepts males between two homes where youth share the kitchen and living space.
- TN Children's Homes in Clarksville, TN is an IL Residential program for females.

During the analysis of expanding EFC criteria, IL and senior staff discussed options around the structure and funding status of the EFCS Independent Living Allowance program.

Improvements were made to the way Tennessee DCS develops Independent Living and Transition plans for youth in DCS custody and those receiving Extension of Foster Care Services. The enhancements were developed in the Tennessee Family and Child Tracking System (TFACTS), and included adding system enforcement of required categories and action steps to address such things as credit checks, opportunities for mentoring and support, essential documents to provide upon exit from care, maintenance of health insurance and providing information about advance care plans/health care proxies. These sections of the permanency plan also print out in ways that make it easier for youth and team members to review and work with. These changes bring Tennessee's permanency plan development more in line with federal law and state policy requirements, and help ensure older youth have their needs addressed. Modifications in how strength and need records are addressed will systematically link with assessment information in a future phase of the permanency plan enhancement project.

DCS implements Your Money, Your Goals (YMYG), a financial empowerment training designed by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau for social service settings and those who work directly with youth including case managers, private provider agencies and foster parents. This training is different from other financial trainings in that it uses a financial empowerment approach and includes a number of standalone modules. It is designed to start by identifying a youth's goals then planning and using their finances to meet and achieve those goals. For example, if a young person sets a goal of buying a car, they would complete the standalone module on purchasing a vehicle, turning their wish into a set of SMART goals and then mapping out the various steps to get there. Steps may include increasing their credit score, tracking

spending, prioritizing a budget and setting a savings target. Each training begins with an examination of cultural values around money and identifies how the values influence our financial behavior. This is an opportunity for youth to reflect on their birth family's culture and values about money and how this has affected them. The toolkit also has a section for the foster parents or case managers to examine their own culture and values about money and how this may influence their work with youth. The class completes a series of exercises on needs, wants and obligations that prompts foster parents and case managers to consider how their own priorities may differ from those of the youth they are working with. This challenges participants to consider the youth's perspective and how they can use this as a starting point for their discussion about finances.

YMYG also emphasizes the connection with Prudent Parenting protocol and trauma. When talking about buying a car, purchasing a cell phone, budgeting skills and bank accounts, participants are reminded about the Prudent Parenting standards and encouraged to think about what they can do differently moving forward. Participants also explore the benefit of financial empowerment in reducing the impact of trauma for young people. Youth who experience a level of empowerment in this area of their lives increase their overall self-confidence, helping them to see positive aspects of their lives other than the trauma they have experienced.

Your Money Your Goals training has served both DCS staff and foster parents.

- DCS Foster Parents trained: 22
- DCS Staff trained: 17

The Department of Children's Services continues to administer the federal Personal Responsibility Education Program, to support the implementation of Wyman's Teen Outreach Program (TOP®), an evidence-based Positive Youth Development model, in selected Level II and III residential treatment centers, at John C. Wilder Youth Development Center, through Metro Nashville Juvenile Court and in a Metro Nashville school. One thousand three hundred and seventy three (1,373) adolescents participated in TOP® in these settings during FY 2019.

TOP® takes a broad youth development approach to the prevention of pregnancy and other risky behaviors by engaging youth in curriculum-guided discussion groups that are active and engaging as well as youth-driven community service learning projects.

TOP® provides important opportunities for youth to participate in "normalized" activities, consistent with the federal mandate that youth in custody have access to developmentally normative experiences as much as possible. TOP® nurtures the key factors research identifies as protective from risk and adversity, including: social competence, problem-solving skills, autonomy or sense of purpose, high expectations and opportunities for participation.

TOP® service learning activities are particularly powerful vehicles for enhancing protective factors and building social and emotional skills. Last year foster youth participating in TOP® provided 19,805 hours of service to Tennessee communities. Youth at Florence Crittenton in

Knoxville made custom duffel bags for youth in foster care who lacked a way to carry their belongings. Young men at Lebanon Academy regularly walked dogs and cleaned cages at a local animal shelter. In TOP®, youth plan as well as carry out their service learning projects, practicing skills like planning, decision-making, budgeting, team work, etc.

Oasis Center provides training, technical assistance and oversight of the TOP® implementation effort. In FY 2019, TOP® was implemented at 24 locations across the state. Oasis staff provided one hundred sixty one (161) hours of onsite monitoring and coaching at TOP implementation sites. One hundred thirty seven (137) staff from implementing agencies participated in TOP® training, gaining skills in effective youth engagement and high quality group facilitation.

Opportunities

- 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 a borderline IQ or certain mental health diagnoses. In some instances, youth have particular needs that are going unaddressed due to gaps in the array of services and housing.
- Increasing access to housing for young adults receiving EFCS, especially in West Tennessee, is another opportunity DCS continues to explore. Tennessee Housing and Development Agency (THDA) has provided information on grants and their web-based housing search. Current DCS providers are developing unique approaches to make housing available as well and applying for local housing authority funding. DCS is exploring other options such as establishing EFC-only foster parents.
- DCS continues to strive toward increasing employment opportunities for youth in care. Employment Opportunities for adolescents are necessary to assure economic self-sufficiency and generate self-esteem. Expanding EFCS to include working criteria would provide significant support and opportunity for youth working to obtain employment. Expansion remains DCS' greatest opportunity.
- Integrate preparation for adulthood with improved, quality Transition Planning to include the use of peer support young adults who are current or former Extension of Foster Care participants.
- Improve work around LGBT population and immigrant populations.
- DCS is in the process of developing data tracking mechanisms for youth (female and male) in custody that are pregnant/expecting and/or parenting a child.

YVLIFESet Overview

Youth Villages' YVLifeSet program is designed to assist young adults between the ages of 17 and 22, who are transitioning from child welfare and juvenile justice services to adulthood, in learning the skills needed to live successfully. A successful transition includes maintaining safe and stable housing, participating in an educational/vocational program, developing life skills necessary to become a productive citizen and remaining free from legal involvement. YVLifeSet specialists (directly providing the services to the young adults) carry a small average caseload of 8-10 and have multiple contacts (via phone or face-to-face) weekly with each young person in order to engage on a high level. The program is based on a multiple systems approach meaning services are aimed not only at the individual but at all the areas (systems) that may affect the youth (e.g. community, peer group, family, and school/work).

Young adults in the YVLifeSet program are assigned a specialist responsible for aiding youth in every step of the transition process. Specialists are responsible for teaching skills and lessons associated with the focal areas and will ensure that young adults are capable of accessing community resources such as medical attention, housing, and financial support, if necessary. Specialists are available to the young adults 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They also make a minimum of one face-to-face contact per week with the young adult. The number of sessions can be increased based on individual needs.

The focal areas of YVLifeSet include permanency, education, employment, housing (through natural supports), basic independent living skills, and engagement. To support youth in their transition to adulthood, the program uses evidence-based interventions and best practices with regards to the following areas: trauma, pregnant/parenting youth, substance abuse issues, physical and mental health, domestic violence, financial literacy and basic independent living skills.

Since the program was created in 1999, it has helped over 10,933 young adults in Tennessee (and 17,529 nationwide) build independent and successful lives for themselves. Youth Villages began providing YVLifeSet services in Tennessee over 19 years ago and has effectively replicated the program in numerous locations. Today, through direct services and partnerships, YVLifeSet serves 1,407 young adults daily in Tennessee and eleven other states, with a success rate (defined as living independently or with family) of 85 percent at Discharge, 92 percent at 12 month follow-up.

Partnership with DCS

For more than 19 years, Youth Villages has been providing comprehensive services to young adults aging out of care and other at-risk youth in Tennessee through its YVLifeSet program. In 2007, the Tennessee Department of Children's Services partnered with the Day Foundation and Youth Villages to reach more youth across the state. That public/private partnership was

expanded in 2013 when Youth Villages stepped forward and offered to match dollar-for-dollar state funding for services. Youth Villages offered to contribute \$3 million in private dollars if the state would match those private dollars with \$3 million to provide comprehensive services for young people aging out of foster care. This continued partnership provides the opportunity for every youth aging out of care in Tennessee to receive services. In 2019, Youth Villages began providing the case management portion for Tennessee's youth who have chosen to accept Extension of Foster Care Services.

Tennessee YVLifeSet Data FY 2019

- YVLifeSet served about 672 youth daily
- 1,575 youth participated in the program
- At 12 month follow-up:
 - 93 percent In school, graduated or working
 - 92 percent Living with family or independently
 - 91 percent No trouble with the law

Clinical Trial

From October 2010 to October 2012, Youth Villages' YVLifeSet Program participated in an independent, random assignment evaluation conducted by MDRC, a non-profit, non-partisan research and policy group that specializes in this type of evaluation. MDRC has an outstanding reputation in the field for methodological rigor and for translation of evaluative findings to policymakers. Dr. Mark Courtney, a researcher with Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, led the study as principal investigator. The study, which took place in Tennessee, included more than 1,300 youth, making it the largest random assignment evaluation of this type of program for young adults in this critical transition phase.

The evaluation examined the difference that Youth Villages' YVLifeSet program makes for youth aging out of care – its impacts on a range of outcomes, including education, employment, mental health, and financial security. One-Year [Impact Findings](#) from the evaluation were released in 2015, and show that participation in the YVLifeSet program boosted earnings by 17 percent, increased housing stability and economic well-being (including a 22 percent decrease in the likelihood of experiencing homelessness), and improved some of the primary outcomes related to health and safety (including improvements in mental health and a decrease in intimate partner violence). The program was found to be equally effective across different subgroups of youth, including youth with and without histories of juvenile justice custody, as well as urban and rural youth.



Project NOW!

History

The Helen Ross McNabb Center is a premier, not-for-profit provider of behavioral health services in East Tennessee. Since 1948, the Center has provided quality and compassionate care to children, adults and families experiencing mental illness, addiction and social challenges. As the Center celebrates 70 years of providing services to communities in East Tennessee, its mission remains clear and simple; “Improving the lives of the people we serve.”

McNabb has over 30 years of experience working with runaway, homeless and at-risk teenagers, complemented by over 20 years of providing outreach services to youth in local schools, as well as many years providing street outreach services, over 15 years of offering transitional living services for older youth and young adults and five years of permanency services for youth in foster care. Following a merger with Child & Family Tennessee in August 2013, Helen Ross McNabb Center assumed management of *Project NOW!*, including *Opportunity Passport* and *Sisters Saving Sisters*. Helen Ross McNabb is accredited by CARF (Commission on Accreditation for Rehabilitation Facilities).

Core Services

Project NOW! (Navigating Opportunities that Work) is one of the many programs operating under the umbrella of the Helen Ross McNabb Center. Over the past year, *Project NOW!* has provided Resource Center services to youth in the Grand East Division of the State (including Knox, Blount, Claiborne, Cocke, Grainger, Hamblen, Jefferson, Sevier, Anderson, Campbell, Loudon, Monroe, Morgan, Union, Roane, and Scott counties). The Resource Center provides financial education through *Opportunity Passport*, life skills, programs of interest to youth, opportunities with local business and industry and post high-school information, as well as study skills and opportunities for the youth to give back to the community. *Project NOW!* provides sexual health and pregnancy information for girls through the *Sisters Saving Sisters* program. Our financial literacy partner provides assistance with instruction and individual coaching to youth. The Jim Casey Foundation provides training for staff, leadership opportunities for youth and financial assistance in the form of matches for youth who meet the saving criteria for an asset purchase. Other collaborations of note are driving and personal safety skills programs through the Knoxville Police Department. Incentives workshops at the Knoxville Career Center include personal safety through a private collaboration and pregnancy prevention programs through a new organization called Step Up. *Project NOW!* continues to work with the Department of Children’s Services who provide the most program referrals as well as Youth Villages, foster parents and foster youth themselves and other private entities that are providers of services to youth in foster care.

Several organizations have provided services through training programs and information sessions providing a positive experience for our youth. Pellissippi State assists youth in providing presentations focusing on post-secondary opportunities. Area military recruiting offices have presented other post-secondary options. The Knoxville Center for Applied Technology offers tours, free lunch and encouragement and information for youth transitioning out of foster care. Other collaborations include: ICAM (Integrated Community Agency Meeting), the Knoxville Leadership Foundation and the Knoxville Homeless Coalition; all providing interagency support to transitioning youth. The Job Corps has become a resource for many of the youth aging out and needing postsecondary training as well as housing and support.

Local Partnerships

- Department of Children’s Services (Knox County, Smoky Mountain and East Tennessee)
- Helen Ross McNabb Center’s
- Runaway Shelter, Transitional Living Program (TLP) and Street Outreach
- K-town Empowerment Network and K-town Coordinating Council
- Knox County Juvenile Court
- Knox Area Compassion Coalition
- Youth Villages Transitional Living Program
- Goodwill Industries
- University of Tennessee Work Achievement Values Education (WAVE) HiSet program
- Knox County Public Defender’s Office
- University of Tennessee Center For Parenting
- Pellissippi State Community College
- Knoxville Interfaith network (KIN)
- First Tennessee Bank
- YMCA Knoxville
- Knox County Health Department
- Knox Auto Parts
- Emerald Youth Foundation
- Knoxville CAC Transit
- Omni Visions
- Tennessee College of Applied Technology
- Socially Equal Energy Efficient Development (SEED) of Knoxville
- Smoky Mountain Financial
- Belmont College
- Middle Tennessee State University
- Knoxville Police Department
- Tennessee Housing Development Authority
- Knoxville Homeless Coalition
- Knox County CASA
- Knox Works
- West Chevrolet
- Food City
- Tennessee Career Center, Knoxville
- Twin City Motors
- Workforce Connections
- Pink Diamond Defense
- KARM (Knoxville Area Rescue Mission)
- Job Corps
- Youth Transitions Advisory Council of Knoxville
- Panera Bread
- Chick-fil-a
- Knox County Schools
- Village Behavioral Health
- CCAHT Community Coalition
- Against Human Trafficking
- Metro Drug Coalition
- UT Extension
- KAPPI

Successes

In July of 2018 the Resource Center moved into a space shared by the Transitional Living Program, the Runaway Shelter, and Homeless Outreach. The current facility also shares a building with the Great Starts program (for at-risk mothers and children). Also on the campus is the Katie Miller Residential Facility that serves teenage girls. The new space offers opportunity to serve the youth that are in many of these other programs and also qualify for *Opportunity Passport* and *Sisters Saving Sisters*.

The Helen Ross McNabb Center *Project NOW!* Facebook Page posts about resources and program opportunities to keep youth informed. The page has more than 300 likes. Quarterly, the Page reaches more than 1,000 Facebook users. The rate of contact with users and “likes” has grown exponentially in the last months and youth, foster parents, stake holders, businesses and providers are encouraged to use it as a source of information.

Community outreach continues to grow and has resulted in numerous workshops made available thru various organizations and businesses. Financial literacy classes through *Opportunity Passport* as well as *Sisters Saving Sisters* and other life skills-related classes are held regularly. Active participation in the program continues to grow due to consistency and efforts to reach youth in in a variety of ways. Attendance at life skill events and other programs has grown from attendance of 2 – 3 to 8-12. A relationship with several community partners has resulted in much needed classes on driver’s safety, personal safety, soft skills, career opportunities, human trafficking, character development, healthy living, and cooking through collaboration with the Knoxville Career Center and Knoxville Police Department and the University of Tennessee Extension Office and Pink Diamond Defense. The Center will continue its mission of providing financial education, leadership activities, sexual health, as well as life skills and asset purchase training and other programs that are of benefit and useful to the youth. Helen Ross McNabb has provided the use of their trainer to teach CPR and First Aid as well as AED use.

Sisters Saving Sisters has become a vital part of the *Project NOW!* Resource Center. Over 170 young women have taken advantage of the course in the past year. *Sisters Saving Sisters* addresses disease and pregnancy prevention, saying no to unwanted sex, birth control, healthy relationships, sexual responsibility, as well as information about community resources providing free or inexpensive sexual health resources. Ladies in *Project NOW!* and *Sisters Saving Sisters* have been given the opportunity to attend self-defense classes through a collaboration with Pink Diamond Defense that offers programs monthly. Through all of these programs young women engage in discussion of issues pertinent to their life experiences in an accepting non-judgmental environment and find ways to solve their problems and the issues they face.

As a result of Jim Casey funding, *Project Now!* was able to provide sexual health classes for males. Twenty nine males participated in classes regarding health relationships, STD prevention, contraception, responsible relationships and long term goal setting. The young men engaged in

conversation that was productive and positive and provided information to them to encourage responsible actions to protect themselves and potential partners.

Project NOW! has several youth enrolled at the University of Tennessee, East Tennessee State University, Tennessee Tech, Belmont College, Lipscomb University as well as Roane State, Walters State, Pellissippi State Community College, Roane State Community College, Lincoln Memorial University. Youth are also enrolled at the Tennessee College of Applied Technology, Paul Mitchell Cosmetology, and barber school. In the past year at least three youth have chosen the military for a post-secondary option serving full-time and in reserve status. Two youth have been accepted by the Job Corps and several others are in the application process.

Knoxville Police Training Department has purchased state of the art driver training simulators and has provided their use to the program. This is a huge positive for these youth who typically have no one to assist them in the basics of driving and/or provide a vehicle for them to learn and practice. Being able to acquire a license is an incentive to save for a vehicle. Without this local support many of these youth would not have gotten driving practice with positive direction, correct information, and a supportive knowledgeable adult to assist with acquiring driving skills.

Project NOW! Youth 4 Youth has become active and has developed a mission statement and goals. *Youth 4 Youth is committed to reaching out to foster youth, networking with the community, making an impact to change policies and practices that effect youth encourage speaking engagements that help advocate, and to connect with other youth* is the mission statement. They have been actively implementing it, from encouraging potential foster parents in training classes to foster older youth to raising money for Christmas gifts for young people and volunteering for several local non-profits that provide needed community service.

Challenges and Barriers

The Knoxville based Resource Center has its own unique population differing some from other centers throughout the state. The population of youth referred to *Project NOW!* are, for the most part rural youth. Transportation to the Center is a problem for youth who do not drive and many that are more than 50 miles from Knoxville.

The *Project NOW!* Center has a substantial number of youth who cannot participate because of lack of transportation. While the program is available to youth in 16 counties no transportation exists beyond the initial entry into the program through *Opportunity Passport* where transportation must be provided by a caseworker or the foster parent. Continual referrals have increased the number of young people in the program with youth who cannot attend, have no internet or continually must be encouraged to communicate, attend events, complete paperwork, and others who are not interested. Communication regarding the Resource Center services is an obstacle with much misinformation being passed on to providers, youth, and foster families.

Only one person is employed at the Resource Center and services are sometimes stretched between programs. Scheduling, planning and presenting activities, networking with the

community, providing financial literacy classes, sexual health classes, processing matches and the accompanying paper work, as well as continually communicating with youth have to be carefully prioritized and scheduled. In order to provide classes at hours and times youth can attend there is a great deal of evening work.

Our youth are resilient despite a history of abuse and neglect and in many cases a transient life style. Soft skills, general knowledge and basic communication safety and healthy living skills are sometimes lacking and continued programming is needed to address the development of these essential tools for success.

Next Steps

The coordinator, youth, or others should continue to take advantage of speaking opportunities that inform area organizations of these youth in transition and their needs and challenges. Continuing to increase networking with other service organization in the area should be done. Area organizations both public and private should continually be educated on the services and goals of the Resource Center. The Center will continue to support youth in acquiring life skills, completing requirements for a high school diploma and in selecting post-secondary training that best meets their needs and career goals.

Programs and presenters that meet the real world and life challenges of these youth in transition should be a priority as well as more opportunities for youth leadership. Providing opportunities for youth to attend cultural, community, art, or athletic events continues to be a needed service for these youth to expand and stimulate their interest in the larger world. Collaboration

Knoxville Resource Center	July 1, 2017 - June 30, 2018	July 1 2018 - June 30, 2019
Opportunity Passport		
Number of new youth enrolled	48	38
# of Financial Literacy Classes offered	12	6
# of Asset Specific Classes offered	5	5
% of youth with favorable post-test outcome	93%	92%
OPPS Surveys		
(April & October only), % of youth completing an OPPS survey	October 2017 82.6.6%	October 2017 82.6%
	April 2018 96.3%	April 2018 96.3%
Community Partnership Boards		
Number of board meetings	7	8
Number of new door openers created	13	11
Life Skills Classes		
Number of life skills classes held	17	29
Total number of participants in life skills classes	92	134
% of youth showing increased proficiency pre to post assessment	93%	92%
Youth Leadership & Engagement		
Number of youth leadership activities offered	6	9

between the Resource Center and other providers is needed and would provide a stronger base and larger base of programs and better understanding of the Resource Center services.



Monroe Harding

Homes • Healing • Opportunities

History

Since 1893, Monroe Harding has been changing young people's lives. We step in as a family, providing resources for Homes, Healing, and Opportunities, what we call the "H2O" that is vital to helping young people succeed. As the result of a comprehensive strategic planning initiative over the past year, Monroe Harding recently adopted a new Cause Statement to provide clarity to our work:

Monroe Harding's cause is to ensure that foster care youth and other vulnerable young people build a solid foundation of strengths that position them for success in adulthood.

Our programming is aimed at providing therapeutic care to move families beyond trauma, develop resilience and repair as individuals, and promote reconciliation when possible. We seek to prevent youth from entering care and ensure that youth in care or exiting care have the resources they need to lead successful, independent lives. We are meeting this mission through four key programs: Foster Care, Residential Programs, Education & Workforce Development, and Therapy and Healing. Monroe Harding is the only agency in Middle Tennessee providing a comprehensive continuum of services for current and former foster youth from birth to 26.

Youth Connections Resource Center's Core Services

Youth Connections has been in existence for almost 13 years and has focused on quality performance since inception. The center provides an assortment of services focused on empowering youth ages 16-26 through their transition out of care. Youth Connections supports our youth through The Opportunity Passport™ financial management classes, high school equivalency prep, post-secondary education planning, assistance with employment, sexual health education and assistance with finding housing. The center also has an in-house thrift closet specifically for foster youth. Through our programs, we encourage personal stability and a healthy transition into adulthood.

Local Partnerships

Youth Connections continues to partner with the Department of Children's Services, Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative and US Bank. Through our Workforce Development program, Monroe Harding has partnered with several local businesses and organizations such as Crossroads Pet Shop and Adopt, Habitat ReStore, Rocket Fizz Candy Shop, and McKendree

United Methodist Church. These businesses have agreed to provide internships/vocational training or employment opportunities to prepare young people for the workforce.

The center also collaborates with Oasis Center, Martha O'Bryan Center, Goodwill Career Solutions, Youth Villages and the Community Advisory Board to provide services to youth who do not meet the criteria to be in DCS custody.

Successes

Since Youth Connections has been in existence, over 170 young people have obtained their High School Equivalency through their participation in the HiSet classes, and 80 percent of Workforce Development participants have obtained employment with the assistance of the career coach. In addition to young people learning sound financial management and the importance of saving, numerous youth have matched their savings through The Opportunity Passport™ to purchase assets such as transportation, laptops for school and investments in a Roth IRA.

S.H.E. (Sexual Health Education), which has been in existence for just over two years, has so far educated over 200 young women on how to change their behavior to avoid contracting HIV and STDs and to significantly decrease their chances of being involved in unintended pregnancies. We have educated young women not only at the resource center but have also facilitated this program at G4S, Camelot, Oak Plains Academy and Omni Visions residential facilities. In an effort to respond to the needs of the young ladies participating in this program, Youth Connections started a monthly support group, Sisterhood. Sisterhood is designed to give the participants a safe space to continue the conversations regarding sexual health, and to also connect with and provide support for one another through their life experiences and challenges.

Youth Connections is located on the third floor of McKendree United Methodist Church. This downtown Nashville location places the center in the heart of the city and makes it more accessible to program participants. The center is also in close proximity to many of its community partners, including the Department of Children's Services, and closer to many resources such as the Nashville Public Library. The church has also provided volunteers, donations to the thrift closet and support for many of our events.

During our annual graduation, Monroe Harding awarded 10 scholarships that totaled \$10,000. The participants were able to use their scholarship money for tuition, rent, transportation, or needed supplies for their post-secondary training. Students enrolled at several different higher education institutions including Tennessee State University, Nashville State Community College, Tennessee College of Applied Technology, and Volunteer State Community College.

Challenges and Barriers

Many of the young people who 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, lack 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. Many of these presenting issues make it difficult for the young people to remain focused on following through with completing the goals that they have set for themselves. Monroe Harding has resources in place to assist with these challenges. We continue to offer barrier assistance in the form of providing transportation either by a staff member or providing bus passes and/or gas cards, paid internships, assistance with accessing mental health resources, and assistance with needed supplies and equipment for employment.

Next Steps

Monroe Harding has recently been chosen by the Metro Nashville Government and the Nashville Career Advancement Center to be the driving force for one of only two re-engagement hubs in the city. This hub will provide services and connections to community resources for young adults ages 17-24, who have been disconnected from work or school. While we have already been providing these services for young people in the foster care system, this grant allows us to connect to a larger population of young people and to expand the work of Monroe Harding at a time when it is needed most.

Monroe Harding has a new initiative that focuses on a comprehensive career readiness approach. We work with young people to develop a career path that will lead to the economic self-sufficiency they want and need while providing the social and emotional benefits that come from meaningful employment. The program has a trauma and evidence-based training curriculum to provide the skills needed to get a job and a range of supports to help youth successfully complete training and maintain employment. This approach works to identify and minimize the obstacles of life that affect career decisions and the ability to seek, secure and sustain work.

Nashville Resource Center Report	July 1, 2017 - June 30, 2018	July 1 2018 - June 30, 2019
Opportunity Passport™		
Number of new youth enrolled	49	32
# of Financial Literacy Classes offered	11	8
# of Asset Specific Classes offered	22	18
% of youth with favorable post-test outcome	99%	98%
OPPS Surveys		
(April & October only), % of youth completing an OPPS survey	68% & 94%	98%
Community Partnership Boards		
Number of board meetings	3	3
Number of new door openers created	5	4
Life Skills Classes		
Number of life skills classes held	5	4
Total number of participants in life skills classes	65	76
% of youth showing increased proficiency pre to post assessment	99%	95%
Youth Leadership & Engagement		
Number of youth leadership activities offered	9	10



Youth and Young Adults Resource Center

History

The Partnership for Families, Children and Adults has been serving the Tennessee Valley community for 140 years through professional counseling, crisis intervention, and prevention services. It began with the 1877 establishment of the Ladies Aid Society, which later became the Florence Crittenton Home. Under the direction of United Way, The Florence Crittenton Service, Family Service Agency and Travelers Aid Society merged into Community Services of Greater Chattanooga, Inc. in 1973. In 1981, the agency assumed the name Family and Children's Services of Chattanooga, Inc., and in 2003 became the Partnership for Families, Children and Adults. Today, the Partnership has grown to become the region's largest and most comprehensive human services agency serving 19 counties in Tennessee, Georgia, and Alabama.

Accreditation and Memberships:

- Council on Accreditation of Services for Families and Children, Inc. (COA)
- United Way of Greater Chattanooga
- Alliance for Children and Families, Tennessee Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, Tennessee Conference on Social Welfare

Mission Statement

Empowering People. Building Communities.

Vision Statement

Helping build a stronger, smarter, safer community.

Partnership Programs Impact

The Partnership FCA is one of Chattanooga's oldest and largest human services non-profit organization. Partnership FCA has over 20 programs that provide individuals and families with the tools and resources to build stability and create independence through stability services (which includes youth and young adult serving programs), deaf services, victim support services, and elder support.

Partnership programs focus on specific needs of the Greater Chattanooga community providing experienced social workers, counselors and other highly trained professionals. Together, these

separate, but complimentary centers of services provide support to families and individuals who may have many related needs.

Updates

As of October 1, 2018, Partnership's Youth Services department has transformed into the River City Youth Collective (RCYC). The RCYC serves current and former foster youth, juvenile justice youth, and those who have experienced domestic or sexual abuse and trauma between 14-24 years old. With the addition of a new grant through the Office of Criminal Justice we have been able to supplement our Resource Center with career and education navigation and therapy in addition to life skills education, financial literacy, sexual health education, and transitional living.

As of May 2019, the RCYC has added additional staff. Fernando Barrientos will serve as a transitional living caseworker, primarily to male youth and teach the *manhood 2.0* sexual health education curriculum to male participants. Caroline Kindiger transitioned from Partnership's shelter as a shelter advocate to the RCYC as the new Advocacy and Prevention Coordinator. Caroline is a liaison between the shelter and RCYC to serve youth, young adults, and children in the shelter. Caroline will also develop programming for children under 12 through the VOCA grant.

During summer 2019 the RCYC offered a range of expressive therapies through the George R. Johnson Foundation's Expressive Art Therapies for At-Risk Youth program. Over the summer youth participated in movement, drumming, music, art and yoga therapy. This fall expressive therapies will include karate and a fall break drama therapy option.

In July 2019, the RCYC began a partnership with Chattanooga's East Ridge Residence and Victory Lap, providing the state's first program adding youth aging out of foster care into senior housing vacancies. At the moment, one RCYC young adult has moved to East Ridge Residence to live and work with the seniors in the residential community.

This summer the RCYC began a partnership with Camp Hope America, a trauma informed camp model to bring healing and hope to youth and children. Throughout the 2019-2020 school year, the RCYC's Advocacy and Prevention Coordinator, will be working to identify a partner camp, find trauma informed counselors and adult staff, and recruit youth for a week of camp next summer. In addition, she will develop year round programming.

River City Youth Collective (RCYC)

The River City Youth Collective believes that all people have the right to live stable, healthy lives. The RCYC is committed to supporting youth and young adults in their transition from adolescence to independence. The RCYC is a collective, a safe space where youth and young adults can find acceptance, support, and opportunities to learn and grow from and with one another. The RCYC is "for the youth, by the youth."

In addition to the already established programs, the RCYC has completed the first year with a full-time Education and Career Navigator who assists youth in obtaining employment by helping with applications, resumes, interviews, and transportation. Additionally, the Navigator will assist youth in achieving academic goals by assessing academic strengths and weaknesses, obtainment of GED, assisting with college/scholarship applications and essays, and establishing a long-term education plan. A part-time therapist is also available for private counseling, groups, and workshops. The vision for RCYC therapy is to empower youth to take ownership of their own emotional health. Therapy sessions provide a safe space where youth are able to speak freely without judgment, process past, and present emotions, improve self-awareness and establish and pursue personal goals. Individual therapy sessions, group therapy sessions and enrichment classes are all offered. Therapy is available as a free service to RCYC youth ages 14-24 years old that qualify.

The RCYC will still support the *Sisters Savings Sisters* sexual health education curriculum for girls and young women, the Jim Casey Opportunity Passport financial literacy curriculum, and life skills education classes for youth and young adults transitioning out of foster care and juvenile justice. Additionally, sexual health programming for boys and young men has been added to the Center's workshop catalog. As of fall 2019, male clients may also receive education through the *manhood 2.0* curriculum.

Partnerships

Partnerships in and around the Chattanooga area have enriched the experience of youth involved in the River City Youth Collective. The RCYC receives a majority of referrals from the Independent Living Specialists in both Hamilton and Bradley counties. During fall 2018, the RCYC partnered with the UT/TSU Extension office to provide cooking classes. Janice Hartman, SNAP Ed Extension Agent, graduated three individuals in the program which included lessons in food safety, kitchen safety, meal planning, shopping for the best value, and reading food nutrition labels. Youth completed the program by preparing a taco bar for other RCYC youth at a holiday party. Janice will continue providing cooking classes this fall.

Consumer Credit Counseling Services of Chattanooga provides financial literacy education for youth participating in the Opportunity Passport curriculum and Tennessee Valley Federal Credit Union opens savings accounts for every youth.

The RCYC has built relationships with several area expressive art therapists through the George R. Johnson's Expressive Art Therapies for At-Risk Youth program including:

Lauren Higgins (movement), Robert (Bob) Stagner (drumming), Katherine Goforth Elverd (music), Lori Bilbrey (yoga), and Jas Milam (art).

Referring Agencies:

- The Department of Children's Services

- Chambliss Center for Children
- Youth Villages
- Omni Visions
- Cleveland Academy
- Parkridge Valley

Community Partners:

- Consumer Credit Counseling Services of Chattanooga
- Unum
- EPB
- Tennessee Valley Federal Credit Union
- UT Hamilton County Extension Office, SNAP-Ed
- UT Bradley County Extension Office, SNAP-Ed
- CoLab

Successes

- Rebranding
- New Grant
- 88.9% Opportunity Passport survey completion during April survey administration.
- Victory Lap Partnership
- RCYC Youth selected to represent Tennessee at the Jim Casey National Youth Leadership Institute this year

Challenges and Barriers

Many of the young people who come to RCYC lack support systems that can assist them with navigating the challenging period of transitioning into adulthood. They are often unemployed, lack 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. Many of these presenting issues make it difficult for young people to remain focused on following through with completing the goals that they have set for themselves.

A challenge for the RCYC has been the transportation of youth and young adults. While there are staff and a shared mini-van available to pick up those without transportation it is a long task which can take upwards of an hour barring traffic and weather. As the RCYC grows into a larger program, it will be more difficult to continue transporting youth to classes and workshops. Reliable transportation for youth will help them stay focused and complete their goals while involved with the RCYC

Next Steps

In the new fiscal year, RCYC will build relationships with community partners to strengthen the community partnership board and develop new Door Opener opportunities. RCYC also plans to redesign the Pathways transitional living program to include house parents, new housing options, and additional incentives for youth in the program. Finally in the next year the RCYC will be developing and implanting its first summer of Camp Hope.

RCYC Report	July 1 2018- June 30, 2019
Number of new youth enrolled	19
Number of Financial Literacy Classes Offered	4
Number of Asset Specific Classes Offered	6
(April and October) percentage of youth completing an OPPS survey	October 2018: 81.48%
	April 2019: 88.89%
Number of board meetings	1
Number of new door openers created	3
Number of life skills classes held	17
Total number of participants in life skills classes	71



South Memphis Alliance, Inc.

History

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

SMA work focuses largely on five core initiatives

- **Dream Seekers Initiative** works with young people transitioning from foster care.
- **Hope Chest** includes comprehensive sex education, as well as support services for pregnant and parenting teens that are or were in foster care.
- **Community Action Panel** is composed of community leaders from over a dozen South Memphis civic groups and neighborhood associations.
- **Social Suds Resource Center**, located inside a neighborhood laundromat provides a plethora of social services to patrons of the laundromat.

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

Emergency Services

- Assistance with Food vouchers
- Bus passes
- Assistance with Clothing/Uniform vouchers
- Assistance with housing option location

Educational Services

- Intensive life skills for foster youth
- HIV/AIDS education and testing
- Financial education
- Goal setting
- Teen pregnancy and parenting supports

Local Partnerships

- Tennessee Department of Children Services
- Books From Birth
- Memphis Cares
- Urban Child Institute Memphis
- United Way of the Mid-South
- Planned Parenthood of the Greater Mid-South
- Omni Visions
- Porter Leath
- Meritan Inc.
- Shelby County Office of Childhood and Youth
- Grizzlies Foundation
- CD Council
- Memphis Public Library
- The Assisi Foundation
- Memphis Artists for Change
- Shelby County Health Department
- Just City, Criminal Justice Services
- First Tennessee Bank
- State of Tennessee (Shelby County) Community Advisory Board
- Urban Child Institute
- ResCare
- Shelby County Family Planning
- Lemoyne Owen College
- American Works
- Metropolitan Inter Faith Association (MIFA)
- Paragon Bank
- Shelby County Juvenile Court
- Habitat of Humanity
- The University of Memphis
- MALSI
- St. Jude Research Hospital
- Hope Credit Union

Successes

Our Opportunity Passport Dream Seekers were celebrated during our Annual Foster Care Awareness Month festivities. Eight young people graduated from high school. They received graduate baskets, as well as \$50 visa gift cards.

Challenges and Barriers

- Housing is a consistent barrier to engagement. The young people are moving multiple times in a year due to their inability to secure housing. Their addresses and their phone numbers change frequently, making them unable to connect with needed resources.
- Transportation needs are a barrier for the population that SMA serves. The agency provides bus passes to participants; however, the public transit system in the area is often inadequate.
- Due to transportation issues, youth who enroll in the program at satellite sites are often more difficult to engage for group activities.

Next Steps

- SMA continues to diligently seek housing options and innovations in providing housing for young people transitioning out of care. SMA is applying for funding to build a transitional housing apartment complex to help meet this need.
- Sponsorship for IDA matches, stipends/incentives, computer equipment and building space are among top priorities.

Success Story

Rasheema has been a part of SMA's Dream Seekers and Teen Plus program since July 2013. She has been in and out of foster homes since she was 9 years old. Her caseworker introduced her to the Dream Seekers Program, where she took advantage of the benefits the program had to offer. She has been an active member of the dream seekers program and attends all events at SMA. Rasheema is a sophomore at the Southwest Tennessee Community College and is studying to become a Phlebotomist. She is also working full time to provide for her children. Rasheema recently passed her NHA Phlebotomy Technician (CPT) Certification Exam. Not only are we proud of her educational accomplishments, we are proud to announce that she was selected as SMA's Fantastic Foster Youth of the year. She has also been spotlighted on SMA's website. Rasheema has overcome many obstacles including the stigma that is associated with being a foster child. She most certainly is a success.

Memphis Resource Center Report	July 1, 2017 - June 30, 2018	July 1 2018 - June 30, 2019
Opportunity Passport™		
Number of new youth enrolled	32	73
# of Financial Literacy Classes offered	5	8
# of Asset Specific Classes offered	4	6
% of youth with favorable post-test outcome	85%	85%
OPPS Surveys		
% of youth completing an OPPS survey (April & October only)	100%	100% (April)
Community Partnership Boards		
Number of board meetings	2	1
Number of new door openers created	3	2
Life Skills Classes		
Number of life skills classes held	4	6
Total number of participants in life skills classes	20	12
% of youth showing increased proficiency pre to post assessment	100%	100%
Youth Leadership & Engagement		
Number of youth leadership activities offered	4	5

DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES

Tennessee Healthy Transitions Initiative

The Tennessee Healthy Transitions Initiative is a five-year \$5 million discretionary grant awarded to the TDMHSAS by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) in September 2014. The purpose of the Tennessee Healthy Transitions Initiative is to assist Tennessee youth and young adults with or at risk of developing a serious mental health condition and/or co-occurring disorder in improving their health and wellness, leading self-directed lives, and reaching their full potential. This goal will be accomplished through providing coordinated public awareness, outreach and engagement, and access to treatment and resiliency and recovery support services to youth and young adults ages 16-25 with or at risk of serious mental health conditions or co-occurring disorders in two targeted communities. Healthy Transitions provides targeted and innovative awareness, outreach, and specialized treatment and recovery support services to the following prioritized populations of youth and young adults ages 16-25: those in contact with the criminal justice system; those aging out of foster care through child welfare; those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness; and those who identify as being Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, or Intersex (LGBTQI).

Local Laboratory 1 is located in a rural seven-county area in Northwest Tennessee (Benton, Carroll, Gibson, Henry, Lake, Obion and Weakley counties) and is being implemented by Carey Counseling Center, Inc. *Local Laboratory 2* is located in Hamilton County in Southeast Tennessee and is being implemented by Volunteer Behavioral Health Care System. The two Local Laboratories began providing services in February 2016. Services and supports include the following: care coordination utilizing the Transition to Independence Process (TIP) Model; Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Supported Employment; supported education; and peer support services. Tennessee Voices for Children houses the Statewide Youth Coordinator and assists with statewide public awareness and youth engagement efforts. Centerstone Research Institute houses the Lead Evaluator, who coordinates evaluation activities.

Team members from TDMHSAS attend and are active participants at Youth Transitions Advisory Council (YTAC) meetings, now providing updates on progress toward grant goals at each Council meeting.

Some of the successes during FY19 year include:

- The Tennessee Department of Mental Health Services (TDMHSAS), in collaboration with Youth Era, created and developed a training curriculum for a Young Adult designation of the Certified Peer Support Specialist program, a specialized training and certification program tailored to meet the unique needs of youth and young adults. This

curriculum is in the final approval stages, and the first training cohort of Certified Young Adult Peer Support Specialists (CYAPSS) will take place in the coming fiscal year.

- The TDMHSAS Youth and Young Adult Coordinator and the Healthy Transitions Statewide Youth Coordinator increased recruitment efforts for the Statewide Young Adult Leadership Council (YALC) which resulted in increased participation with an average of 10 youth/young adults regularly attending monthly YALC meetings since December 2018.. Through a partnership between TDMHSAS and Tennessee Voices for Children (Healthy Transitions), a post-System of Care Conference event for young adults and providers who serve young adults was held in September 2019 to include trainings for youth, young adults, and providers. There were 8 youth and young adults (Y/YA) that attended the Y/YA track that focused on helping Y/YA increase their advocacy and leadership skills, and engage with providers and professionals. There were 21 staff from provider agencies who attended the provider track that focused on training opportunities to effectively serve Y/YA. Additionally, there was a facilitated networking time with intentional time for providers and young adults to network and learn from each other, as well as a celebration of the Healthy Transitions grant.
- The TDMHSAS Statewide Young Adult Leadership Council (YALC) has met at least monthly and has participated in ongoing activities to ensure youth and young adult voice and input at the state level, including:
 - Participating on and presenting to the Council on Children’s Mental Health
 - Participating on the Youth Transitions Advisory Council
 - Planning and Executing Children’s Mental Health Awareness activities, including continuation of their Humans in Real Life project (a Humans of New York-inspired photo campaign that focuses on mental health, substance abuse, and systems involvement)
 - Participating in a panel presentation entitled “We are the Experts: The Value of Lived Experience” at the Annual State Convention for the National Association of Mental Illness Tennessee and attending the System of Care Across Tennessee conference and post-conference event (Round Table Talk)Sharing their experiences as participants of the Statewide YALC in focus groups conducted by our evaluation partners from Centerstone Research Institute
- Two Healthy Transitions staff at the local level completed the process of becoming Certified Site Based Trainers and two TDMHSAS staff continue to seek site-based certification status of the Transition to Independence Process (TIP) Model, an evidence-informed approach for effectively engaging and working with youth and young adults.
- Through the First Episode Psychosis Initiative, TDMHSAS contracted with Vanderbilt Center of Excellence to hire a Statewide Youth/Young Adult Best Practices Trainer and Consultant who is also in the process of becoming a Certified Site Based Trainer in the TIP Model.
- TDMHSAS applied for and obtained a second round of Healthy Transitions funding that began in March 2019 and will continue until March 2024. The new grant, Healthy

Transitions: Improving Life Trajectories (HT-ILT) will assist Tennessee youth and young adults ages 16-25 with a serious mental health condition or co-occurring disorders, with a particular focus on co-occurring mental health and intellectual and development disabilities, in maximizing their potential to assume adult roles and responsibilities and lead full and productive lives. HT-ILT will provide targeted and innovative awareness, outreach, and specialized treatment and recovery support services in the following new local sites:

- Local Site 1 is located in Davidson County in Middle Tennessee and is being implemented by Mental Health Cooperative. Local Site 2 is located in Greene County in Northeast Tennessee and is being implemented by Frontier Health. Both sites have begun the contracting and hiring process, but have not yet begun providing services. Services and supports will include the following: outreach; care coordination utilizing the Transition to Independence Process (TIP) Model; Supported Employment and Education using the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Model; and peer support services.
- Tennessee Voices for Children (TVC) will assist with statewide public awareness activities and consultation to the local sites on development of local Young Adult Leadership Councils. Additionally, TVC will house a Certified Young Adult Peer Support Specialist who will be embedded within the mobile crisis system at Mental Health Cooperative providing short-term peer support services and linkage and referral to youth/young adults who have contact with the mobile crisis system.
- TDMHSAS will house the Lead Evaluator, who will coordinate evaluation activities.

These efforts support sustainability of behavioral health services that are driven by and that meet the unique needs of youth and young adults; expand the young adult workforce through the Certified Young Adult Peer Support Specialist program; and infuse youth and young adult voice at both the local and state level.

Tennessee First Episode Psychosis Initiative (FEPI)

In the FY 2014 appropriation, Congress allocated additional funds to SAMHSA to support “evidence-based programs that address the needs of individuals with early serious mental illness, including psychotic disorders.” States were required to set-aside five percent of their Mental Health Block Grant (MHBG) allocation to support this evidence-based program. The Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS) began planning for the implementation of the five percent set-aside to address early intervention programming as soon as the 2014 budget legislation passed. The proposal approved by SAMHSA included provisions for a First Episode Psychosis (FEP) treatment program focusing on a rural area of Tennessee using a Coordinated Specialty Care model. The proposal provided a beginning budget, staffing and implementation model designed to be flexible in the face of the challenges of implementing an urban program in a rural area. With innovations focusing on the use of technology and a one-provider arrangement, the proposal was approved and implementation began within 30 days following approval.

The program, titled OnTrackTN and modeled after OnTrackNY, serves youth and young adults between the ages of 15-30, who are experiencing psychotic symptoms such as hallucinations, unusual thoughts or beliefs, or disorganized thinking, with symptoms present for more than a week but less than 24 months. In the months following the approval of the proposal, TDMHSAS contracted with Carey Counseling Center, Inc. (Carey) to implement the program in a seven-county area in the northwest corner of Tennessee. The counties in the service area are Lake, Obion, Weakley, Benton, Carroll, Gibson, and Henry.

In the spring of 2016, Congress increased the set-aside in the State Mental Health Block Grant program from 5 to 10 percent for first episode programs. TDMHSAS submitted a proposal to expand the First Episode Psychosis Initiative (FEPI) through the 10 percent set-aside, which was approved by SAMHSA. The proposal identified the following two priorities: (1) Expand the OnTrackTN program to two additional sites in Tennessee, and (2) Create a statewide FEPI Learning Collaborative consisting of, at minimum, all three OnTrackTN sites.

In May 2016 TDMHSAS released an Announcement of Funding requesting proposals to implement OnTrackTN in two counties among Davidson, Hamilton, and Shelby. A review panel scored the proposals and contracts were awarded to Mental Health Cooperative, Inc. in Davidson County and Alliance Healthcare Services in Shelby County. In FY19, TDMHSAS partnered with Helen Ross McNabb to implement an OnTrackTN team in Knox County.

As a result of the 2018 federal appropriations, there was an increase in the SAMHSA Mental Health Block Grant which resulted in additional funds being available through the 10 percent set-aside. Because of this increase, TDMHSAS released an additional Announcement of Funding in September 2019 requesting proposals to implement OnTrackTN in Hamilton County. A review panel scored the proposals and a contract was awarded to Helen Ross McNabb. All programs were trained in the OnTrackNY model. Additionally, the increase in funds was used to bring on a Statewide Youth/Young Adult Best Practices Trainer and Consultant through Vanderbilt Center of Excellence. This position provides support and training to the OnTrackTN sites and will provide fidelity checks to ensure fidelity to the OnTrack model.

Team members from TDMSHAS regularly attend YTAC meetings to provide updates on progress toward goals. Some of the successes during FY 2019 year include:

- OnTrackTN teams served 134 youth and young adults experiencing a first episode of psychosis.
- Expansion of OnTrackTN to two additional sites: Knox and Hamilton County, both operated by Helen Ross McNabb
- Addition of a Statewide Trainer and Consultant to ensure support and fidelity of OnTrackTN teams
- TDMHSAS, in collaboration with Vanderbilt's Statewide Trainer and Consultant, offered multiple training opportunities to OnTrackTN sites including: OnTrack Model training

provided by OnTrackNY, TIP Model training, IPS for youth and young adults, Structured Interview for Psychosis-Risk Syndromes, MIRECC GAF, and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for psychosis.

- Carey Counseling Center completed participation in a national fidelity assessment study conducted by Weststat in which they scored in good fidelity.
- OnTrackTN staff participated in a panel discussion facilitated by the Statewide Y/YA Best Practices Trainer and Consultant at the annual System of Care Conference in September 2019, detailing their experiences and work with individuals who have experienced a first episode of psychosis.

These efforts support sustainability of behavioral health services in Tennessee that meet the unique needs of youth and young adults experiencing a first episode of psychosis. Services provided by OnTrackTN teams focus on helping these youth and young adults work toward recovery and meeting personal goals.

Tennessee Clinical High Risk for Psychosis Initiative

The Tennessee Clinical High Risk for Psychosis Initiative is a five-year \$1.6 million discretionary grant awarded to the TDMHSAS by SAMHSA in October 2019. The purpose of the Clinical High Risk for Psychosis (CHR-P) Initiative is to assist Shelby County, Tennessee youth and young adults ages 12 to 25 who are at clinical high risk for developing psychosis to improve symptomatic and behavioral functioning; delay or prevent the onset of psychosis; and minimize the duration of untreated psychosis; enabling them to resume age-appropriate social, academic, and/or vocational activities. This goal will be accomplished through development of a stepped-model of care that ensures easy access to evidence-based services and supports for youth, young adults, and their families.

The CHR-P Initiative will have one site in Shelby County that is being implemented by CMI Healthcare Services. Services and supports will include care coordination utilizing the Transition to Independence Process (TIP) Model, Supported Employment and Education utilizing the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Model, family peer support and young adult peer support services. Centerstone Research Institute will provide evaluation of the CHR-P Initiative.

Some of the successes during FY19 year include:

- Executed contracts with CMI Healthcare Services and Centerstone Research Institute.
- TDMHSAS, in collaboration with Vanderbilt's Statewide Youth/Young Adult Best Practices Trainer and Consultant, provided training opportunities to the CHR-P team: TIP Model, IPS Model for youth/young adults, Structured Interview for Psychosis-Risk Syndromes and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for psychosis.
- The CHR-P team at CMI has developed marketing materials and has provided outreach in the greater Shelby County area to promote awareness of the program.