



STATE OF TENNESSEE  
**TENNESSEE COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

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**Youth Transitions Advisory Council**

May 1, 2014

12:30 pm – 3:30 pm Central Time  
Goodwill Industries of Middle Tennessee

**Meeting Summary**

**Participants:**

Dave Aguzzi	Mary Jones	Heidi Moseley
Erick Batts	Dustin Keller	Nneka Norman-Gordon
Liz Blasbery	Sumita Keller	Linda O’Neal
Tameka Daniel	Richard Kennedy	Vivian Park
Joseph Goldsmith	Kristy Leach	Steve Petty
Ashley Harrington	Mike Leach	Clayton Ramsey
Ginger Harris	Linda McCorkle	Ned Solomon
Timothy Hickman	Melissa McGee	Erica Spencer
Betsy Holmes	Quatrece McKinney	Tawny Spinelli
Joan Jenkins	Diana Miller	April Tanguay

**Welcome and Introductions (Linda O’Neal)**

- O’Neal welcomed the group, thanked them for attending to do great work for youth in transitions, and asked for introductions.
- She thanked Dustin for completing the meeting summary and Steve for his work on the report to the legislature and meeting coordination. .

**Acceptance of November Meeting Summary (O’Neal)**

- O’Neal asked members to review the November Meeting summary and asked for revisions or edits.
- **IT WAS MOVED (HARRINGTON) AND SECONDED (SPINELLI) TO ACCEPT THE NOVEMBER 2013 MEETING SUMMARY. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

## Department of Children's Services and Office of Independent and Transitional Living Update (Mike Leach)

- Leach stated the office has served more youth this year than last year. He does not have the usual information as his staff are preparing for the end of the fiscal year. He will forward reports to the group when they are complete and will discuss them at future meetings.
- The Office of Independent Living is included in the Administration of Children and Families' review happening at the Department of Children's Services. ACF will look at the previous five years and discuss the department's goals for the next five years.
- His office is also reviewing the Brian A. settlement to ensure there is an appropriate service as required in Independent Living and transition.
- His staff along with youth groups has developed a rights and responsibilities brochure for youth in custody and a youth handbook of over 100 pages of information. These resources will assist youth in becoming better advocates for their needs.
- The credit checks originally slated to begin in spring 2014 have not started. It took nine months to complete contracts with the three credit-reporting bureaus and they still need to integrate this within TFACTS to get batches of reports completed. He is currently unsure of a completion timeframe. Other states are having difficulty with this as well. Based on communications with other states who are performing credit checks on their youth, about five percent of youth have had issues with credit. This gives DCS some estimate of how much work will be involved with clearing credit for youth in custody.
- Leach discussed a recent reality check event at Chambliss Center for Children. The event lasted four hours and included a mock lifestyle experience about how to budget and spend money. Sixty young people attended the event and several adults volunteered to assist, including Leach and the Juvenile Court Judge for Hamilton County.
- American Youth Forum for Policy will conduct a Foster Care Youth Study in Tennessee focused on transitioning youth. This three-day event will bring leaders from seven other states to learn about Tennessee Foster Care. Site visits will be conducted at Monroe Harding and Youth Villages. Petty and Leach will present at the conference.
- Leach has been meeting with universities about the needs of youth in transition. Colleges include Carson Newman and Bethel University. DCS also has an agreement with the Tennessee Colleges for Applied Technology. DCS youth in transition can be moved to the top of the waiting list ensuring a faster enrollment. TCAT have an 80 percent completion rate for their students and all students are guaranteed employment.
- Soloman asked if there is a set curriculum for the reality check program used at the recent event in Chattanooga. The Chamber in Hamilton County supported the program and has a curriculum they use.
- Harris stated that she is working on youth engagement with the Office of Independent Living. She contacts youth who have aged out of foster care and did not accept services. She has been successful in getting youth to reconnect. She stated the main reasons youth do not accept transition services are a need to be independent from DCS, they do not completely understand the services available, and they do not want to have the same caseworker. She has also

attempted to partner with shelters in the area as a means to reconnect with youth. Participants discussed contacts and other avenues for assistance with contacting shelters outside the Nashville area.

- Harris stated youth must enroll before their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday to receive services, but the program will follow you through four years of college as long as you have enrolled before age 21.
- Miller asked if there is a resource list used for the job training or placement. Harris said she uses DCS' resource linkage division.
- O'Neal suggested working with Labor and Workforce Development to take advantage of their programs for this population. She also commented on the great partnership with shelters.
- Leach discussed the impact of the Affordable HealthCare Act (ACA). Youth aging out of foster care are eligible for TennCare until age 26. Youth should go to Healthcare.gov and fill out forms, including checking the boxes related to foster care. This will not be an automatic process if they turn 21 prior to January. Youth who age out from other states are not eligible for TennCare.
- Aguzzi shared information about policy and procedures updates for DCS. He stated Petty had sent out an updated Policy and Procedure Manual prior to the meeting. DCS has made significant enhancements to TFACTS. Updates were needed to include relevant information. Petty will also send out the link to the new website. Aguzzi hopes it is youth friendly. He stated that they are in compliance with the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD). This could not have been accomplished without DCS partners and the resource centers.
- He also gave a data update with 544 episodes of extension of foster care from July 2013 until March 2104. As this can count can include duplicates/repeats, it represents 525 youth served. There are 257 youth currently active in the program.
- O'Neal expressed her appreciation to Leach and his staff for sharing this information and activities completed by DCS.

### **Update from Resource Centers**

- Monroe Harding (Quatrece McKinney)
  - McKinney stated their program moved to McKendre United Methodist Church last week. They are excited about the transition as it is closer to bus terminal and resource partners. The church will not only provide space but also other resources as well.
  - The GED classroom is available and ready in the space. The program has 15 enrolled and five recently earned their GED.
  - There are 18 people in the opportunity passport program and 13 in SHE, which is a sexual health education program funded by a federal grant.
  - The center will begin monthly community service projects led by a young person.
- Leach will send data on all the resource centers

- Helen Ross McNabb
  - The previous Resource Center coordinator has moved to a different position. They are in the process of assigning staff. Youth were sad to see her go but will be a part of the selection process for her replacement.
- South Memphis Alliance (Tameka Daniel)
  - On April 5, there was an installation of stakes and blue ribbons across the street from the center to represent the number of youth involved in foster care services.
  - They currently have 21 in Opportunity Passport with a graduation scheduled for next week.
  - Through a partnership with Meritan, the center has an additional location. The center also has a great relationship with Flextronics with a commitment to hire young adults with job experience. Flextronics will consider the center's program to be providing the required experience.
- Chattanooga/Hamilton (Leach)
  - Partnership for Child and Families will be the contract agency for a new resource center in Chattanooga. The program will start taking referrals on May 21.
  - The program already has a banking partner and is working on additional support systems. The Center will host a formal grand opening in late June.
- O'Neal thanked representatives for updates from the resource centers.

**Update from Youth Villages Transitional Living Program (Joseph Goldsmith)**

- Because of the partnership with DCS, YV has served 1,202 youth in this fiscal year is currently serving 584.
- YV completed 434 NTYD surveys.
- Goldsmith also discussed the recently released Transitional Living Study executive summary. He stated that the preliminary results show:
  - Local context shapes youth experiences and resources;
  - Most of the youth who participated in services were engaged;
  - Staff addressed a wide range of topics with youth;
  - Services were administered according to program model; and
  - Additional impacts of the program will be released in early 2015.
- The First Lady recently held an event around music featuring an impromptu concert from three Tennessee youth at the close of the event.
- Aguzzi recognized YV for the work on the NYTD surveys.

## **Updates from Treatment and Recovery for Youth Grant (April Tanguay, Ashley Harrington, Clayton Ramsey and Erica Spencer)**

*See “Youth Recovery” handout*

- Tanguay gave a brief overview for those who were not present at the last meeting. The program started September 1, 2013. The grant funding is \$8.3 million for four years to deliver an evidence-based practice (EBP) to transition-age youth. TDMHSAS chose Adolescent – Community Reinforcement Approach (A-CRA) as the EBP. The program has sites in Maury and Madison counties. The goal is to reach out to 2,000 professionals.
- Staff is beginning to partner with the System of Care initiatives will be going to the Georgetown Institutes this July.
- Harrington stated that Centerstone, the Maury county site has 18 enrolled and four in the enrollment process. They have reached out to 460 professionals about the program. Staff received A-CRA training in January. The clinicians are a third of the way through a process that typically takes a year to complete. She explained how both sites are implementing the process differently. Centerstone is community based while Pathways is clinic based.
- Ramsey provided a handout for the Madison County site managed by Pathways (see handout). They currently have seven enrolled and two in the process. This program will include clinic-based visits mostly but will do some community/home visits as necessary. Their clinicians are also working on certifications. They have reached out to 207 people in 22 presentations.
- Tanguay stated that they are working on marketing materials for the programs and will bring them to the next meeting
- McCorkle mentioned that five adolescent substance abuse residential programs did not receive continued funding through the budget process this year and several will have to close, including the one in Madison County provided through Pathways. The state has had these programs for quite some time.
- O’Neal reminded participants that YTAC is serving as the state level advisory group for the grant. A goal for YTAC and other similar groups is to be open to all who have an interest in working on the issue.
- O’Neal also expressed her appreciation to the presenters for sharing this information with the group.

### **Next Meeting**

- O’Neal discussed the need to meet over the next few months to begin to work on recommendations for the next report due to the general assembly in October.
- Scheduled 2014 meetings for YTAC are:
  - July 31, 2014;
  - September 18, 2014; and,
  - November 20, 2014

### **Other Business**

- Acord discussed his agency’s strategic initiative to be more involved with transition age youth. They started an effort to compile information about current services and supports in the

Chattanooga area. He stated his agency does not want to recreate the wheel but wants to fill gaps as needed.

- Spinelli encouraged them to engage some youth in this process to determine what the youth believe is needed and to provide input.

### **Announcements**

- O'Neal mentioned that Leach is a presenter on a webinar in a couple of weeks. Petty will send out information so interested persons can join the call. Leach stated the webinar is to discuss the state's postsecondary success. He plans to share information about YTAC recommendations and what others can do to make change happen.
- O'Neal mentioned a Shelbyville Times Gazette article featuring Spinelli's presentation to a CASA program. Spinelli will also be a part of a national webinar organized by Prevent Child Abuse. Petty will also send out this information to the group.

### **Next meeting agenda**

- O'Neal mentioned ideas for the next meeting's agenda including updates from the TRY grant, Youth Villages, DCS and Resource Centers and beginning work on the report for October. O'Neal would also like to discuss successes from the previous report. Additional possible topics included involving THDA and a panel about housing, Labor and Workforce Development about their services and councils, Vocational Rehabilitation, and information on Specialized Foster Care Review Boards.
- Petty stated the TCCY website has an YTAC page that will have meeting summaries, handouts, and other relevant material to YTAC. ([www.tn.gov/tccy/ytac.shtml](http://www.tn.gov/tccy/ytac.shtml))
- O'Neal shared her appreciation for everyone attending and working to improve services and supports for youth in transition.

Adjourned at 2:47 p.m.