



YTAC Annual Report Subcommittee Meeting Summary

Meeting Date: July 12, 2019

Meeting Location: Department of Labor, Nashville, TN

Approved August 8, 2019

Recorded By: Gina Lynette

Attendance:

Name	Title	Organization	Present
Steve Petty	Youth Policy Advocate	Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth	Y
Carla Garrett	Youth Grants Program Manager	Department of Labor and Workforce Development	Y
Courtney Matthews	Director of Independent Living	Department of Children's Services	Y
Dave Aguzzi	Assistant Director of Independent Living	Department of Children's Services	Y
Jon Berestecky	Transitional Youth Specialist	Chambliss Center for Children	Y
Ned Andrew Solomon	Director of Partners in Policymaking	Council on Developmental Disabilities	Y
Gina Lynette	Director of Communications, Learning, and Development	STEP, Inc (Support and Training for Exceptional Parents)	Y

Meeting Location

Building: 220 French Landing Drive, Nashville, TN 37247

Conference Room: TN Room

Meeting Start:

Meeting Schedule Start: 9:00 am.

Meeting Actual Start: 9:05 am.

Meeting Facilitator and Scribe: Gina Lynette.

Agenda

- **Welcome and Introductions**

- Steve Petty opened the meeting with a welcome and a little history of what brought us to this conversation.
- Gina Lynette introduced herself as a facilitator and explained that she was volunteering her services because she sees the importance of this group's work and wants it to be positive and productive.
- Everyone introduced themselves (see attendance) and the roles that bring them to YTAC.

- **How we'll work together**

- Group norms were established through a quick agreement of mutual respect, taking care of ourselves (see: bathroom, water, snacks, fidgets), and keeping our minds on the meeting.
- **What's our charge?**
 - Group Mission was established by having everyone state their personal purpose for being there in the form of a mission statement and sharing that with the group.
 - To have and ensure youth have an opportunity to achieve a self-fulfilling life.
 - To support youth in their transition to adulthood and more independence.
 - To help young people aging out experience better outcomes – successful adulthood.
 - I am here to increase the effectiveness of the Annual Report to improve the transition to adulthood of all youth.
 - Ensure youth in transition from foster care to adulthood have a system of support that promotes a thriving future.
 - We are here to improve the YTAC annual report such that it is well organized and only contains what is absolutely necessary to convey the YTAC members contributions and recommendations.
 - Procedure:
 - Annual Ad Hoc Recommendations Committee formed at the April YTAC meeting.
 - Suggested Recommendations turned into Steve Petty (or person in his position) no later than May 31.
 - Ad Hoc Committee will meet as schedules allow in June or July to review / replace / rewrite recommendations.
 - Recommendations will be presented to full YTAC at August meeting.
 - TCCY will write and format DRAFT report and send out for feedback.
 - Feedback will be due September 1.
 - TCCY Publications staff will complete the report for October release date as written in TCA 37 2-601.
 - Recommendations:
 - Ad Hoc Committee spent the bulk of the time reviewing the 60 standing recommendations.

- A facilitated process of “dot voting” was used to establish which recommendations should continue and which ones should be considered “accomplished”.
 - If all of the dots were in agreement, the recommendations were handled according to the votes.
 - If there was disagreement – even by a single member – in how the recommendation should be treated, the entire committee had a facilitated discussion about that recommendation and came to a determination. (It was not determined by “majority rules”.)
 - The committee came to consensus on all 60 of the recommendations. No one was “overruled” or “outvoted” in this process.
 - Of the 60 recommendations, ____ were determined “accomplished”, ____ were combined into another recommendation, and the remaining recommendations were kept as ongoing recommendations.
 - The remaining recommendations were taken outside of this meeting for editing and review through an email process open to the entire committee.
- Annual Report
 - Goals: A report folks will read and use.
 - Includes:
 - Legally Required Info.
 - Strategies.
 - Messaging – both Legislative and Administrative.
 - Celebrates Success.
 - Questions:
 - Where do accomplishments / recommendations we’ve gotten close on (has been implemented) go?
 - How do we better collaborate and use the Council for info sharing?
 - How do we better use the website for info sharing?
 - Other Suggestions:
 - There should be a small number of core topics that each need to be written as a possible, accountable, actionable recommendation.

- Include in the recommendations the number served and the potential to serve. i.e. “We could serve ___ if this recommendation is policy / law.”
 - Other (see: time)
- **Final Round: What did you like or appreciate about this process**
 - Everyone’s voice was heard – Everyone came to consensus – Felt Accomplished
 - Outcome focused + accomplished! Very efficient process. Great team effort. Great facilitation by Gina.
 - Efficient – Effective – Democratic – Conclusive
 - Tactile and Visual – I work best this way! / Well organized. / Respectful and designed to get input. / Kept on task. / Fun
 - I appreciate deep discussions.
 - Facilitated meeting and an easy process that included feedback / input from all attendees on the recommendations that should stay & go. Also, establishing action steps for moving forward.
- **Adjourn**

Meeting End

MEETING SCHEDULE END: 12:00 PM

Meeting Actual End: 11:55 AM

Post Meeting Action Items

Action	Assigned To	Deadline
Editing of the Remaining Recommendations	Ned Andrew Solomon	August 1, 2019
Type up the minutes	Gina Lynette	August 1, 2019

Decisions of the Annual Report Subcommittee

Of the 64 Recommendations under consideration from the 2018 Youth Recommendations Annual Report, the Annual Report Subcommittee agreed to recommend to the Youth Transitions Advisory Council to retire all but the following ten recommendations having found that all others were sufficiently addressed in policy, of an on-going nature or not appropriate for this report.

Draft Recommendations of the Youth Transitions Advisory Council

- 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, 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.