BEYOND THE SAFETY NET:

Preliminary Findings from a Pilot Project to Transform Housing Providers into College Success Programs

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INTRODUCTION

In 2010, California extended foster care to age 21 through the passage of Assembly Bill 12, the California Fostering Connections to Success Act[1]. In making the case for Extended Foster Care, advocates emphasized the opportunity to improve college outcomes for foster youth by supporting them during the difficult transition from high school graduation and into college, thereby increasing their rates of college retention, completion, and ultimately, their long-term economic security.

Preliminary data suggest that foster youth may indeed be experiencing improved college outcomes. Enrollment in community college has increased notably, from 22,866 in 2012-13 to 27,061 in 2015-16.[2] Further, a 2016 study[3] found that youth who remained in Extended Foster Care were more likely to be enrolled in college than youth who had exited at age 18. Youth who remained in Extended Foster Care were also more likely to be enrolled full-time and more likely to receive financial aid.

While these are positive early indications, important questions remain, namely:
- Is remaining in foster care "enough" to improve college outcomes, or is it necessary to change the practice of providers serving transition-age current and former foster youth to increase their emphasis on college enrollment and retention?
- What are providers serving transition-age current and former foster youth currently doing to support college enrollment and retention?
- What additional "core practices" can be added to promote college enrollment and retention?
- What barriers are preventing providers from implementing these practices?

To answer these questions, John Burton Advocates for Youth launched a pilot project in September 2016. The goal of the pilot was to increase the capacity of transitional housing programs to help foster youth enroll and persist in college, which includes career and technical training programs.

FIGURE 2

Service Category	Provide THP+FC Only	Provide THP-Plus Only	Provide Both Programs
# of Programs in Pilot	5	6	17

As of September 30, 2016, these organizations were collectively serving 757 youth; 435 THP-Plus participants and 322 THP+FC participants. Twenty percent of participants across all programs were custodial parents.

WHERE WE STARTED: RATES OF COLLEGE ENROLLMENT AT BASELINE

Figure 3 displays the baseline college enrollment data provided by the programs. As of September 30, 2016, the majority of youth in both THP-Plus (87.5%) and THP+FC (82.9%) had completed high school. A small number of youth -- 15 THP-Plus participants and one THP+FC participant -- had already completed a 2- or 4-year degree. Of those youth who had not yet completed a 2- or 4-year degree, a total of 41.2 percent in THP-Plus and 33.6 percent in THP+FC were enrolled in college, which includes short-term career and technical education programs provided at community colleges.

FIGURE 3: BASELINE COLLEGE ENROLLMENT (AS OF SEPTEMBER 30, 2016)

	Total # of Youth	Youth with HS Diploma or GED		Youth Already Earned 2- or 4-year Degree		Youth Enrolled in College	% of Youth Enrolled in College that had not Already Completed 2- or 4-year Degree
	#	#	%	#	%	#	%
THP-Plus	435	381	87.5	15	3.4	173	41.2
THP+FC	322	267	82.9	1	0.3	108	33.6
All Programs	757	648	85.6	16	2.1	281	37.9

Financial Aid	% of programs that offer a FAFSA workshop:	26%
	% of programs that refer/send youth to outside FAFSA workshops:	74%
	% of programs that track the status of FAFSA applications to ensure that any issues are addressed:	30%
	% of programs that work with youth individually on enrolling for college and applying for financial aid or refer youth to a specific person at the local college for assistance with completing the FAFSA, offer a FAFSA workshop or refer youth to an outside FAFSA workshop, and track the status of FAFSA applications to ensure that any issues are addressed:	22%
Relationships with Local Campuses	% of programs that indicate they have strong relationships with foster youth contacts at all or most of the campuses and regularly refer youth to them:	37%
	% of programs that indicate they know who all or most of the foster youth contacts are at the local colleges but don't have a lot of direct one-on-one contact with them:	11%
	% of programs that indicate they have strong relationships with some foster youth college contacts but not with others:	11%
	% of programs that indicate they know who some of the foster youth college contacts are but don't know all or most of them:	22%
	% of programs that indicate that for the most part, they don't know who the foster youth contacts are at the local colleges:	15%
	% of programs that are visited by their local college(s) who make presentations to their youth about Career Technical Education, foster youth campus support program, financial aid, or general information about the college:	63%
Participation in Collaboratives	% of programs that are part of a formal collaboration focused on improving post-secondary educational outcomes of foster youth in their community:	52%
Staffing & Training	% of programs provide training to case managers and other direct service staff on how to support youth in pursuing post-secondary education during the onboarding process:	41%
	% of programs that have staff members dedicated solely to post-secondary education counseling/case management, such as an "education specialist":	22%

Based on baseline data and information provided by the participating programs, several key conclusions emerged regarding the capacity of participating providers at the onset of the pilot:

WHAT WAS PROVIDED

Each program set goals in September 2016, and created a plan to adopt one or more practices from a Core Practice Model (Appendix B). Over the next 10 months, participating programs received four forms of training and assistance, which included:

WEB-BASED TRAINING

From October 2016 to May 2017, programs were provided web-based training on essential topics related to post-secondary education with a foster youth emphasis. These trainings equipped programs with the information, resources and tools to implement the new practices:

- Foster Youth & Financial Aid, Part I: Completing the FAFSA
- It Takes a Village: Collaboratives Supporting Foster Youth to & through College
- Beyond Case Management: Incorporating Academic Coaching
- How to Help Foster Youth Avoid the Remediation Trap & Achieve College Success
- Identifying On-Campus Support & Resources for Foster Youth
- Foster Youth & Financial Aid, Part II: After the FAFSA
- Career Technical Education: Short-Term Programs into Living Wage Employment

The training list is provided along with links to access a recording of each training in Appendix C.

INDIVIDUAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

This web-based training was coupled with individual and small group technical assistance to support each program's implementation plan. From September 2016 through May 2017, programs participating in the cohort were collectively provided over 260 hours of technical assistance. This included individual phone calls between John Burton Advocates for Youth staff and the participating programs to track progress and troubleshoot obstacles, group conference calls that fostered peer sharing and learning, and development of materials to assist individual programs with implementation of their plans.

IN-PERSON CONVENING

Over the course of the pilot, programs attended two in-person convenings and will attend a final convening in October 2017 at the conclusion of the pilot project. The first convening, held in September 2016 served as a kick-off to the pilot project. This is where participating programs learned about the Core Practice Model and developed goals to work toward over the course of

the next year. The second convening was a mid-series convening held in April of 2017. This event served as a check-in, where programs discussed which core practices they had implemented to date, successes and challenges, and exchanged ideas with their peers.

COLLEGE RETENTION GRANTS

Participating programs had access to college retention grants for their youth participants enrolled in college. Youth were able to access one-time grants of up to $400 to support their college persistence and academic success. Between September 2016 and May 2017, 67 students were provided college retention grants, totaling $26,462.35 with the majority granted in the amount of $400. These students collectively attended 41 different colleges, with more than three quarters (76%) being 2-year community colleges, 20 percent being 4-year universities and 5 percent being other types of institutions. (Total does not equal 100% due to rounding). Figure 5 provides a breakdown of grant purpose, with the single most common need and nearly half (48%) of all grants going to support expenses related to transportation.

FIGURE 5: RETENTION GRANT NEED CATEGORIES
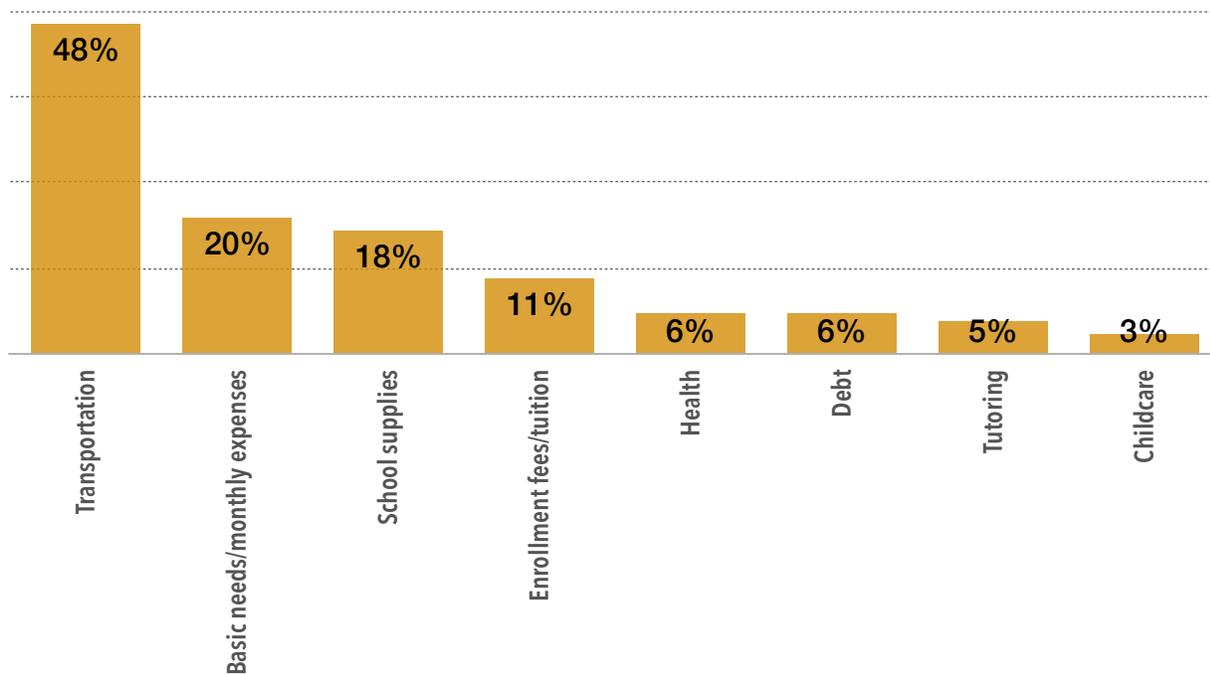
LESSONS LEARNED

Working with the 28 programs over the course of the project yielded important information about how to improve post-secondary educational outcomes of current and former foster youth. Key lessons learned during the pilot include:

- **While providers were eager to improve college enrollment, retention and completion among youth in their programs, this goal and its related activities were not spelled out in their policies and procedures.** While having committed and skilled staff adds great value to a program's ability to help youth succeed in college, a program's success cannot live on the shoulders of staff members who come and go. In order for a provider to ensure practices that foster college success will be a sustainable, consistent part of their program, these goals must be incorporated into the organizational planning, and these practices must be institutionalized into the policies and procedures of that program. Providers expressed interest in assistance with the development of a policies and procedures manual using the Core Practice Model as a framework.

- **Housing providers are largely uninformed about key changes in the college matriculation process, which has changed considerably in the last five years.** In 2012, Governor Jerry Brown signed into law the Seymour-Campbell Student Success Act[4], the legislative cornerstone of a California Community Colleges reform initiative aimed at improving educational outcomes for students and better preparing the workforce needed for California's changing economy. New requirements were put in place with the intent of helping more community college students reach their goal of earning a degree, certificate, career advancement or transferring to a four-year institution, which included key changes to the college matriculation process. Despite these significant changes, few providers were aware of them or how they can support youth in their programs to be successful in navigating them.

- **Providers require more information about which colleges utilize multiple measures and offer alternative strategies to address remediation.** Foster youth are more likely to be placed in below-transfer-level courses (also referred to as basic skills or remedial courses) in the California Community College system in Math, English or English Second Language

(ESL) than non-foster youth. Of students placed in below-transfer-level courses in Math, English or ESL, foster youth are less likely to go on to complete a transfer-level course within two years than their non-foster youth peers.[5] Accordingly, programs working with this population are eager for information about which colleges in California utilize multiple measures for placement and alternate remediation strategies. Multiple measures refers to using variables other than a single test, such as high school GPA and courses to assess a student's need for remediation. The use of multiple measures for placement has been found to lead to placement in one or more courses higher than current assessments. Alternate strategies for delivering remedial coursework also produce more promising outcomes than the traditional method of requiring completion of several levels of remediation prior to placement in transfer-level coursework. These alternative strategies include enrolling in transferable courses with co-requisite support, or beginning in accelerated courses one level below transferrable. Despite the importance of these approaches, few participating providers were aware of them, and there is no central location to identify which colleges utilize multiple measures and/or alternate remediation strategies.

- **Mismanagement of financial aid is a significant obstacle for current and former foster youth pursuing college.** Far too often, current and former foster youth in college lose their financial aid after failure to repay an aid overpayment, or from failure to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP). The former scenario, an aid overpayment, can result from a student dropping or withdrawing from a course after their aid is disbursed to them, and failing to pay back the aid they did not "earn". The latter, SAP, is a policy in place with the goal of ensuring students are progressing toward completion of their educational goal. SAP's requirements are three-fold. A student must be: 1) completing their courses with a high enough Grade Point Average (usually a 2.0); 2) passing enough courses along the way (67% completion rate); and 3) completing their educational goal in a reasonable time (students can receive aid for 150% of the units required to complete their program or degree). If a student does not maintain SAP, they can lose their financial aid. More than one in ten retention grants provided over the course of the project went to cover the cost of enrollment fees and tuition for students who did not have financial aid. Providers reported that when a youth loses their financial aid, the likelihood of them remaining enrolled is greatly reduced.

programs whose county THP-Plus rate was not sufficient. The THP-Plus rate is the per youth, per month amount that the program receives to provide room and board and supportive services. THP-Plus rates vary by county, which differs from the THP+FC rate which is a statewide rate, set by the California Department of Social Services, and receives an annual cost-of-living increase according to the California Necessities Index.

- **Foster youth are not immediately entering college upon graduating from high school.** The college enrollment rates of the programs participating in the cohort indicated that college attendance is more common among the older youth, although the majority of youth in both programs have completed high school (87.5% in THP-Plus and 82.9% in THP+FC). THP+FC serves youth participating in Extended Foster Care – age 18 up to 21, and THP-Plus serves former foster youth age 18 and up to age 24 or 25. Since the implementation of Extended Foster Care, the average age of youth participating in THP-Plus has shifted significantly. Over 2010-11, the majority (73%) of youth who entered a THP-Plus program were between ages 18 and 21. Over 2015-16, the majority (85%) of youth who entered a THP-Plus program were between ages 21 and 24.[6] Of programs participating in the cohort, youth in THP+FC are enrolling in college at lower rates than youth in THP-Plus (33.6% vs. 41.2%, respectively). This finding is consistent with statewide data from the THP-Plus and THP+FC Participant Tracking Systems which indicate higher enrollment, retention and completion rates for THP-Plus youth than THP+FC youth.

- **Parenting youth have a particularly challenging experience pursuing a college education.** Programs cited considerable struggles for youth balancing the responsibility of school and caring for a child or children. These youth felt more compelled to work, and/or also struggled with identifying consistent and affordable child care that would allow them to attend class. These findings are consistent with those of Chapin Hall's 2016 study[7] which indicate that balancing school and parental responsibilities was a difficulty faced by the majority of students that were parents. Further, a 2002 study found that 61 percent of community college students who have children after enrolling do not finish their education, which is 65 percent higher than for women who do not have children while in college.[8]

- **Programs in counties that have opted into the THP-Plus extension established by Senate Bill 1252[9] (Torres) in 2014 report positive outcomes.** Providers located in counties that have opted into the THP-Plus extension may serve youth in their THP-Plus programs who

are enrolled in school for up to 36 months (instead of 24 months) and up to age 25 (instead of age 24). Youth must be completing high school or a program leading to an equivalent credential, or enrolled in post-secondary education including vocational education from an accredited institution. The purpose of the THP-Plus extension is to enable more former foster youth to complete their education in a supported environment before their transition to independence, whether diploma, certificate or degree. Programs stated that over time, their enrollment rates have increased, and that their youth are more motivated to attempt to complete their education. Additionally, some programs have reported that implementing the THP-Plus extension has influenced their case management style, shifting to a more hands-on approach in order to ensure youth remain enrolled in school, hence maintaining their housing eligibility. As of June 15, 2017, 21 counties had opted into the THP-Plus extension[10]. A list of counties is provided in Appendix D.

- **Counties play an important role in supporting the post-secondary educational success of current and former foster youth, and have the ability to either encourage or inhibit a program's ability to prioritize college.** Counties can influence the extent to which providers encourage and support the post-secondary educational outcomes of their youth by placing emphasis on educational outcomes to drive service efforts to meet this end, and by not imposing requirements beyond what is required by law for participation in Extended Foster Care, such as a requirement that youth enrolled in school must also be working. This can be detrimental to a student's ability to succeed educationally, and is counter to the intent of the California Fostering Connections to Success Act. Additionally, counties that provide an adequate monthly THP-Plus rate are positioning their providers to assist youth with minimizing their work obligation. Providers require a rate that adequately covers the rent subsidy, supportive services and a high enough youth stipend that, when combined with financial aid, allows the youth to minimize their work obligation. More information about THP-Plus rates is outlined in a February 2017 publication by JBAY.[11] Lastly, counties that have opted into the THP-Plus extension have provided an additional tool to their THP-Plus providers to support youth in persisting through college and completing their certificate, license or degree.

- **Transportation is a significant obstacle to attending college.** Housing is usually reported as the most significant challenge and need for former foster youth. However, given that youth participating in THP-Plus and THP+FC are provided housing, the single most common

need is adequate transportation. Nearly half of all college retention grants provided over the course of the project went to support expenses related to transportation (48%). The majority of the transportation needs were related to the student's vehicle (59% of the transportation-related grants), and included maintenance, repair and registration and insurance fees. Some students lived in areas where their commute to school would take several hours on public transportation (particularly in rural regions of the state). Some were taking night classes and did not feel safe taking public transportation, or were parenting, and with public transportation could not accommodate the tight schedule between classes and childcare.

• **While appreciated by participating programs and their youth, retention grants alone, did not appear to have a strong impact on overall retention**. It became evident that many students experiencing financial crisis or instability required a longer-term, more consistent source of financial support, such as financial aid. This was particularly critical for youth who had lost their financial aid due to failure to maintain SAP or from withdrawing from classes and accruing student debt. Programs valued the extra financial support the retention grants provided for their youth enrolled in college, however devoting additional resources to ensuring programs are prepared to help their youth access maximum financial aid and are capable of educating their students about maintaining their aid, proved to be a more fruitful strategy to address student financial instability.

WHERE WE'RE HEADED

Programs participating in the cohort will continue to work toward their goals to adopt practices from the Core Practice Model, and will continue to participate in the project through September 2017. On average, at the start of the project, programs were utilizing 2.95 of the 8 core practices in their program.

Programs set goals to adopt an average of 3.38 additional practices, which, if successful, will result in programs utilizing an average of 6.33 of the 8 core practices by October 2017, with 70 percent of the programs at least doubling the number of practices they utilize. As of May 2017, several

programs have successfully implemented at least one additional core practice, and are continuing to work toward their remaining goals.

In October 2017, John Burton Advocates for Youth will incorporate the knowledge gained during the pilot project to launch a two year-effort to transform transitional housing providers into college success programs. The total number of participating programs will be increased from 28 to 40 and will be expanded to include more providers that serve youth in the juvenile probation system and providers serving homeless youth. Areas that will be addressed in the two-year project will include:

- **Programs will engage executive leadership and stakeholders to assess how college is viewed and prioritized within their organization.** It is essential that organizational leadership and county partners are informed about the diverse range of educational and career paths available at California's community colleges, and that they view every current and former foster youth as "college material". Leadership at direct service organizations serving foster youth must prioritize post-secondary educational outcomes in strategic planning, fundraising, hiring decisions, and programmatic design. During the forthcoming 2-year project, John Burton Advocates for Youth will engage the executive leadership of the participating programs to be a part of the transformation process.

- **Programs will develop a deep understanding of the college matriculation process.** It is important for housing providers to be familiar with the steps involved in matriculation so that they can assist youth through the process accordingly, particularly to ensure youth are adequately prepared for their assessment tests. For example, orientation dates and formats vary across campuses, but ideally a provider should encourage a student to try to participate in a summer bridge program if the campus offers this as an option. Providers must understand how critical the assessment process is in determining the educational path of a student, and help them to prepare for their assessment tests. Additionally, it is recommended that foster youth try to create their Education Plan with an Extended Opportunities Programs and Services (EOPS) counselor as opposed to a general counselor.

- **Programs will be informed about which colleges employ multiple measures and alternative enrollment strategies to address remediation needs.** Colleges should consider posting on their website in an easy-to-understand, accessible format, whether they utilize

multiple measures to assess skill-level (i.e. high school transcript data and multiple variables), and whether they offer alternate remediation strategies (i.e. beginning in transferable courses with co-requisite support, or beginning in accelerated courses one level below transferrable). During the forthcoming 2-year project, John Burton Advocates for Youth will gather information from colleges across the state in order to provide a list of colleges which utilize multiple measures and/or alternate remediation strategies.

- **Programs will incorporate the practices they utilize to support youth in post-secondary education into their policies and procedures manuals.** During the forthcoming 2-year project, John Burton Advocates for Youth will develop a model policies and procedures document utilizing the Core Practice Model as a framework.

- **Programs will implement protocol to train staff on post-secondary education-related topics during the onboarding process.** During the forthcoming 2-year project, John Burton Advocates for Youth will develop a set of training materials on financial aid, matriculation, academic-focused case management, Career and Technical Education, and on-campus support and resources that programs can provide to their staff.

- **Programs will adopt a case management model that is academic-focused and hands-on.** In addition to other practices, programs will incorporate the tracking of students' academic progress in order to identify potential crises before they occur, and assist youth in addressing them. For example, if a case manager is aware that a student may need to drop a class, the case manager can help ensure the student drops the class by the drop deadline, and ensure that prior to dropping the class, the student has received counseling on campus to better understand how dropping this class may impact his or her financial aid or academic progress. During the forthcoming 2-year project, John Burton Advocates for Youth will assist in determining the most effective mechanisms for tracking students' academic progress.

- **Programs will establish and/or further develop their relationships with their local campus support programs.** Programs that do not already have a working relationship with their local campuses will work to develop a relationship that fosters frequent communication and information sharing to benefit the students they are serving. During the forthcoming 2-year project, John Burton Advocates for Youth will support these relationships and learn

more about what the successful relationships consist of, by facilitating joint convenings between foster youth contacts on college campuses and the transitional housing providers participating in the project.

• **Programs will improve the use of technology to ease communication with campuses and promote college retention.** During the forthcoming 2-year project, John Burton Advocates for Youth will implement Persistence Plus with the participating housing providers. Persistence Plus is a newly developed technology that provides personalized, interactive messages over text message or mobile application to support students in their post-secondary education. Persistence Plus has been found to increase academic performance. Specifically, students enrolled in Persistence Plus are five times more likely to utilize tutors, more likely to pass introductory math courses and more likely to persist among first-generation students.[12] During the forthcoming 2-year project, John Burton Advocates for Youth will expand utilization of the technology and introduce it to the 40 participating housing providers serving homeless, foster and probation youth.

• **Programs will assess their work requirement to determine its impact on college enrollment and retention.** Programs will reevaluate the requirements they place on youth in their THP-Plus and THP+FC programs in order to determine whether they are setting students up for educational success. They will consider alternate program models that minimize a student's need to work, and determine what additional resources they may need to make the necessary changes.

• **Programs will assess how they can help prevent unintended pregnancy among the youth in their programs.** This may include one-on-one discussions between case managers and youth, making contraception and information about contraception available to youth, assisting youth with transportation to and from sexual health appointments, periodic workshops on preventing unintended pregnancy and STDs, or cyclical implementation of evidence-based pregnancy prevention curriculum.

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APPENDIX A

PARTICIPATING THP-PLUS AND THP+FC PROGRAMS

Organization	County of Participating Program
Abode Services	Alameda
Aspiranet	Riverside
Aspiranet	Sacramento
Aspiranet	San Bernardino
Aspiranet	San Joaquin
Bay Area Youth Center, a Division of Sunny Hills Services	Alameda
Beyond Emancipation	Alameda
Bill Wilson Center	Santa Clara
Casa de Amparo	San Diego
Edgewood Center for Children & Families	Alameda & San Francisco
Encompass Community Services	Santa Cruz
Environmental Alternatives	Sacramento
First Place for Youth	Alameda & San Francisco
Imperial Valley Regional Occupational Program	Imperial
Larkin Street Youth Services	San Francisco
Mariposa County Human Services Agency	Mariposa
Nalls Foundation	Solano
Olive Crest	Orange
Peacock Acres	Monterey
Sierra Quest Transition Program	Mariposa
St. Anne's	Los Angeles
StarVista	San Mateo

TLC Child & Family Services	Sonoma
Tuolumne County ILP	Tuolumne
United Friends of the Children	Los Angeles
Unity Care Group	Santa Clara
YMCA of San Diego	San Diego
Youth for Change	Butte

APPENDIX B

CORE PRACTICE MODEL: IMPROVING A TRANSITIONAL HOUSING PROVIDER'S CAPACITY TO SUPPORT YOUTH TO AND THROUGH COLLEGE

1. **PROVIDE INTENSIVE, ACADEMIC-FOCUSED CASE MANAGEMENT/COACHING**
   When youth are supported by adults with knowledge of the resources, systems and processes of getting to and through college, they are more likely to succeed.

   What this practice consists of:
   - Case managers are well-versed on post-secondary education. This includes but is not limited to understanding the range of education options, including Career and Technical Education; understanding the matriculation and enrollment process; being familiar with financial aid, including how to apply for and how to maintain aid; being familiar with the range of on-campus supports and resources for current and former foster youth; and being aware of important timelines and deadlines associated with the academic year.
   - Case managers are hands-on with activities required with enrolling, completing matriculation, applying for and receiving financial aid, and accessing priority enrollment. This may include completing processes with students, accompanying students to meetings with counselors, and assisting youth in advocating for their needs on campus.
   - Case managers work with youth to access necessary supplies, transportation and resources for school, and ensure that they have these things worked out in time to begin classes.
   - Case managers are plugged into the student's individual calendar, including the calendar of the college they are attending, in order to help remind student about critical deadlines and important dates (i.e. financial aid deadlines, priority enrollment dates, etc.), support them during stressful times (i.e. providing care packages during finals), and to assist the student in balancing competing priorities (i.e. parenting, any work obligations, etc.) Programs may consider implementing a texting reminder system.
   - Youth provide mid-term grade reports to case managers to ensure case managers can anticipate obstacles before it's too late. This can be done in a number of different

ways, depending on the program's preference, and what works for the students: Students may provide information on their progress directly to case managers, campus support programs such as EOPS or DSPS may track this progress and provide to the transitional housing program, or the transitional housing program may get this information directly from professors by way of a form the student asks them to complete.

- Case managers ensure that students are completing an Educational Plan with a certified college counselor at their college (this is required to access priority registration), are plugged into the Educational Plan, and support the student's work toward the goals outlined in the plan.

2. ENSURE YOUTH ARE ACCESSING TUTORING AND OTHER ACADEMIC SUPPORT TO MEET THEIR INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

When youth are academically prepared, they are more likely to succeed in school. This is particularly important for current and former foster youth because of the academic challenges often faced by this population as a result of frequent school changes, childhood trauma and other factors that impact academic success.

What this practice consists of:

- Some programs may offer tutoring at their organization's office/site, either through a partnership with a local university that provides student volunteers, or a tutoring organization/company. It's important that tutors understand the population with which they're working, and the individual needs of the student they are paired with.
- Assist youth in accessing tutoring on campus.
- Programs that experience challenges in getting students to access tutoring consistently may develop a tutoring incentive program where students can earn small stipends or gift cards for attending tutoring.
- Develop opportunities for youth to learn the skills necessary to be a successful student, such as how to study, time management, note-taking, how to read a syllabus, etc. This could be provided one-on-one or in workshops provided by your program, or some college campuses may offer these workshops to students.
- Support and encourage youth to reach out to professors early on in the semester to establish a relationship, and for assistance when they are struggling in a class.

3. **DEVELOP A COLLEGE-GOING CULTURE IN YOUR PROGRAM**
    When youth are immersed in a "college-going culture" where attending college is viewed as a normal expectation, they are more likely to attend college.

    What this practice consists of:
    *   Implement staff training/workshops on post-secondary education topics to enrich organizational knowledge and interest of staff, and to dispel myths that college is not for everyone, or that foster youth are better off working without first getting a certificate/license or degree.
    *   Enhance the physical space of your program with college flyers, other informational resources, and college paraphernalia/swag. This may also include a personalized space with a "hall of fame" wall for youth who have earned their certificate/license, transferred, or earned a degree.
    *   Organize events centered around college promotion. This may include a resource fair with local colleges making presentations and handing out swag, and youth workshops on financial aid, enrollment and matriculation, etc. This also may include taking a trip to the local campuses for a tour, or having former program participants who have graduated or been successful in college come speak to the youth in your program.
    *   Create space and structured time to accommodate student needs and foster a student community in your program. This may include making computer time available on site, or hosting study sessions during finals (with food).

4. **ENABLE YOUTH TO BE A STUDENT WITH AS LITTLE WORK OBLIGATION AS POSSIBLE**
    When youth are able to focus solely on school with few distractions, they are less likely to drop out as a result of crisis or life obstacles.

    What this practice consists of:
    *   Ensure youth are accessing maximum financial aid. A foster youth can potentially reach a higher monthly income when financial aid is maximized, than working a minimum wage job.
    *   Establish a monthly stipend amount that, with financial aid is sufficient to cover monthly expenses. If you are a THP-Plus provider and your rate is not sufficient to adequately house and provide services in the region you are located, this may mean

engaging in a discussion with your county or counties about increasing your THP-Plus rate(s).

- If a youth must work while in school, assist youth with structuring their time and balancing competing priorities (i.e. building in study time, not working late shifts the night before an early class, etc.)
- If a youth must work while in school, assist youth with finding a job with flexibility for students (i.e. ideally, a job on campus through work study).
- As your organizational budget allows, build in financial incentives that reinforce positive behaviors and activities (i.e. good grades, accessing tutoring, etc.) and provide a small financial boost.
- For THP-Plus programs, as your organizational budget allows, offer a discounted rent program for youth enrolled in school.

5. **ESTABLISH A CLOSE WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH ALL LOCAL CAMPUS SUPPORT PROGRAMS**

   When youth are participating in campus support programs, they are more likely to succeed.

   What this practice consists of:
   - Have the campus support program representative visit your program and meet your youth.
   - Bring your youth to the campus to visit the campus support program.
   - Ensure case managers are connected to the on-campus supports youth are accessing. This is more than being able to provide a warm referral or "hand-off" for youth, but is an ongoing relationship that consists of regular contact, and communication between the campus support program, transitional housing program and the student about student progress and/or challenges. (Execute a waiver between the youth, the campus support program and the transitional housing program that allows for the youth's progress to be shared)

6. **ENSURE ALL YOUTH COMPLETE THE FAFSA AND FINANCIAL AID PROCESS FROM START TO FINISH, AND MAINTAIN THEIR AID**

When youth receive financial aid, they perform better academically, are more likely to persist, and more likely to complete a degree.

What this practice consists of:
- Work with youth individually on completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Ensure that youth complete the FAFSA by the March 2nd priority deadline to qualify for a Cal Grant, submit a separate Chafee grant application in addition to the FAFSA, and apply for private scholarships.

- Offer a FAFSA workshop or collaborate with another program (i.e. ILSP) who offers this
- Know where and who to send youth to at local colleges for support with FAFSA (i.e. specific contact in the financial aid office, campus support program representative, etc.)

- Make sure youth request their foster youth verification letter from the county or the state, and that they provide any other verification documents requested by the school upon completion of the FAFSA. (Students are notified about other verification requirements via their Student Aid Report and student portal).

- Help students make smart choices about how to manage their financial aid (i.e. do not spend all aid once it is disbursed, pay for necessities before desires, etc.)

- Educate students about the impact of dropping or withdrawing from classes (aid may have to be paid back), ensuring they meet with an academic counselor prior to dropping or withdrawing; and the consequences of student debt (i.e. enrollment hold, can be subject to long-term debt collection, etc.)

- If a student loses eligibility for financial aid because they do not make Satisfactory Academic Progress, assist them with filing an appeal.

- If a student accrues student debt, assist the youth with negotiating payment arrangements (immediately).

7. **ASSIST YOUTH WITH AVOIDING UNNECESSARY PLACEMENT IN REMEDIATION AND ACCESSING BEST OPTIONS FOR ADDRESSING REMEDIATION NEEDS**
When youth are placed in remedial courses, they are less likely to ever make it to transfer-level courses and ultimately complete their educational goals.

What this practice consists of:

- Direct students toward colleges that utilize multiple measures (high school transcript data and multiple variables) to predict student success in college-level courses, as opposed to a single test on a single day.
- Help youth to prepare for assessment tests and understand the importance and purpose of assessment tests.
- Assist youth with navigating the assessment process.
- If placed in remediation, direct students toward more effective mechanisms for addressing remediation needs (i.e. beginning in transferable courses with co-requisite support, or beginning in accelerated courses one level below transferrable).

8. **COLLECT DATA ON POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION OUTCOMES OF YOUR YOUTH PARTICIPANTS AND USE THAT DATA TO INFORM SERVICE PROVISION**

When organizations are data driven, they get better results.

What this practice consists of:
- Set metrics for each outcome area (enrollment, retention/persistence, completion, financial aid utilization).
- For outcome areas not reaching, refocus services to target those areas.
- Example: Reaching youth enrollment goals, reaching retention goals, but not reaching financial aid utilization goals. Why? Based on what's being reported by case managers, youth are completing the FAFSA, but there is a disconnect with all of the required steps after completing the FAFSA. Solution: Staff need more rigorous training and resources to help youth get through these steps – implement training, identify additional outside resources to help youth through these steps.

APPENDIX C
WEB-BASED TRAINING CURRICULUM

Date	Training Topic	Link to Presentation Slides	Link to YouTube Video of Presentation
October 13, 2016	Foster Youth & Financial Aid, Part I: Completing the FAFSA	http://www.jbaforyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/10-13-16-Financial-Aid-Foster-Youth-Part-1.pdf	https://youtu.be/i4-7nfw3nVQ
November 10, 2016	It Takes a Village: Collaboratives Supporting Foster Youth to & through College	http://www.jbaforyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/PPT-for-AR-Leg-Wrap-Webinar-10-26-16.pdf	https://youtu.be/4TPX4Q9XnDE
January 12, 2017	Beyond Case Management: Incorporating Academic Coaching	http://www.jbaforyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/1-12-17-Incorporating-Academic-Coaching-into-Case-Management-2.pdf	https://youtu.be/rz_gdfFB96A
February 9, 2017	How to Help Foster Youth Avoid the Remediation Trap & Achieve College Success	http://www.jbaforyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/2.9.17-Assisting-FY-with-College-Matriculation-.pdf	https://youtu.be/P0UPZ1Ockrc
March 9, 2017	Identifying On-Campus Support & Resources for Foster Youth	http://www.jbaforyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/3-9-17-Webinar-1.pdf	https://youtu.be/R8097OkdMZg
April 13, 2017	Foster Youth & Financial Aid, Part II: After the FAFSA	http://www.jbaforyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/4-13-17-Financial-Aid-Foster-Youth-Part-2-1.pdf	https://youtu.be/PGxkQr7D4fE
May 11, 2017	Career Technical Education: Short-Term Programs into Living Wage Employment	http://www.jbaforyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/5-11-17-Webinar-Presentation.pdf	https://youtu.be/CF40se8IZ84

APPENDIX D
COUNTIES THAT HAVE OPTED INTO THE THP-PLUS EXTENSION ESTABLISHED BY SB 1252 AS OF JUNE 15, 2017

1. Imperial
2. Lake
3. Los Angeles
4. Mariposa
5. Mendocino
6. Merced
7. Napa
8. Placer
9. Riverside
10. Sacramento
11. San Diego
12. San Francisco
13. San Luis Obispo
14. San Mateo
15. Santa Barbara
16. Santa Clara
17. Santa Cruz
18. Solano
19. Ventura
20. Yolo
21. Yuba

This information was provided by the California Department of Social Services on June 15, 2017.

BEYOND THE SAFETY NET

[1] Assembly Bill 12, The California Fostering Connections to Success Act (2010). http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=200920100AB12

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[3] Courtney, M. E., Okpych, N. J., Charles, P., Mikell, D., Stevenson, B., Park, K., Kindle, B., Harty, J., & Feng. H. (2016). Findings from the California Youth Transitions to Adulthood Study (CalYOUTH): Conditions of Youth at Age 19. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. http://www.chapinhall.org/sites/default/files/CY_YT_RE0516.pdf

[4] Senate Bill 1456, The Seymour-Campbell Student Success Act (2012). http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201120120SB1456

[5] California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (2017). *Management Information Systems Data reports*. Retrieved 6/1/2017, from California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Datamart website. http://datamart.cccco.edu/

[6] John Burton Advocates for Youth (2016). THP-Plus & THP-Plus Foster Care Annual Report 2015-16. http://thpplus.org/wp2/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/2015-16-THP-Plus-THPFC-Annual-Report.pdf

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[8] Bradburn, E. M. (2002). Short-Term Enrollment in Postsecondary Education: Student Background and Institutional Differences in Reasons for Early Departure, 1996–98. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education.

[9] Senate Bill 1252 (Torres), Chapter 774 (2014). http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201320140SB1252

[10] This information was provided by the California Department of Social Services on June 15, 2017.

[11] John Burton Advocates for Youth (2017). Why Has Spending on Transitional Housing for Former Foster Youth Decreased, and What Can We Do About it? http://www.jbaforyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/THP-Plus-Spending-Summary-of-Information-Provided-in-2016-17-1.pdf

[12] Persistence Plus website. http://www.persistenceplusnetwork.com/