THP+FC & THP-Plus
Annual Report
2016-2017

Providing Affordable Housing and Supportive Services to Youth Transitioning from California’s Foster Care and Juvenile Probation Systems

A REPORT BY JOHN BURTON ADVOCATES FOR YOUTH
SEPTEMBER 2017
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On behalf of John Burton Advocates for Youth, we are pleased to share the 2016-17 Annual Report for the Transitional Housing Placement Plus Foster Care (THP+FC) and Transitional Housing Placement Plus (THP-Plus) programs. The report includes an analysis of demographic and outcome data derived from the THP+FC and THP-Plus Participant Tracking Systems of youth who exited these programs between April 1, 2016 and March 31, 2017.

The number of youth in extended foster care who are placed in THP+FC continues to grow, with 1,661 youth placed in THP+FC as of April 1, 2017. THP-Plus remains an important program for youth as they transition out of the foster care system. Together, these two publicly funded programs are housing and serving over 3,000 transition-age current and former foster youth in California on any given day, and are well-positioned to make a meaningful impact on youth just before they become entirely independent adults.

As we consider how these programs can best support their youth participants, the report findings raise important questions:
• Why did at least one in three youth (33% in THP+FC and 36% in THP-Plus) who exited a program over 2016-17 exit on an involuntary basis?

• With the average length of stay being 14.1 months in THP+FC and 13.1 months in THP-Plus, why aren’t youth taking advantage of the full three- or two-year program durations?

• With the rate of college enrollment dropping between entrance to and exit from THP+FC, and only a modest increase in college achievement between entrance and exit for THP-Plus, how can we best support programs to re-position themselves to emphasize post-secondary educational success?

• Just 16 percent of THP+FC participants and 36 percent of THP-Plus participants access CalFresh benefits. How can we improve practice and protocol at the local level to ensure that the many eligible youth in these programs become connected to this important benefit?

• The proportion of young women who are custodial parents increased from 21 to 24 percent between entrance and exit in THP+FC, and from 26 to 40 percent in THP-Plus. What are the best interventions to reduce the high rate of unintended pregnancy among transition-age current and former foster youth?

• Youth who experience homelessness prior to entering the programs are more likely to experience it upon exit from the programs, in addition to a number of other adverse outcomes, including a higher likelihood of young parenting and involvement with the criminal justice system. With one quarter (25%) of youth who exited THP+FC and over half (52%) who exited THP-Plus over 2016-17 having experienced homelessness prior to entering the program, how can providers target and tailor their services to meet the needs of these young people and protect against these risk factors?

This report proposes a range of policy and practice improvements for the future that prompt a conversation about these issues and more. We invite you to read the full report.
REPORT METHODOLOGY

Information for the 2016-17 THP+FC and THP-Plus Annual Report was drawn from the THP+FC and THP-Plus Participant Tracking Systems, which are online databases that collect demographic and outcome data about youth in the two programs. The data included in the report was provided by running two different types of reports in each system and analyzing raw data from the tracking systems through Stata Statistical Software.

First, entrance-to-exit progress reports were run on all youth who exited THP+FC and THP-Plus programs between April 1, 2016 and March 31, 2017. This report includes data from samples of 427 THP+FC and 489 THP-Plus participants.

Second, entrance snapshot reports were run on all youth who entered THP+FC and THP-Plus programs between April 1, 2016 and March 31, 2017. These reports include data from samples of 721 THP+FC and 559 THP-Plus participants.

Third, raw data was imported from the THP+FC and THP-Plus Participant Tracking Systems into Stata Statistical Software in order to further analyze data and trends related to youth who entered the programs directly from homelessness or unstable housing, youth supervised by the juvenile probation system, education and employment status, and parenting youth. Prior to analyzing this raw data, participants with “unknown” data were removed from the samples and therefore the sample sizes vary depending on the specific population that was analyzed.

Additional information about THP+FC placements was drawn from the California Child Welfare Indicators Project,¹ which provides customizable information on California’s entire child welfare system.

Finally, individual interviews were conducted with the housing providers and young adults who were profiled in the report.

¹California Child Welfare Indicators Project, http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare/
THP+FC & THP-PLUS ANNUAL REPORT

FINDINGS

Demographics

THP+FC

2016-17 marked the fifth full year of implementation of the Transitional Housing Placement Plus Foster Care (THP+FC) program, a new placement option created through passage of the California Fostering Connections to Success Act (AB 12). Like THP-Plus, THP+FC provides safe, affordable housing and supportive services. Unlike THP-Plus, THP+FC is a Title IV-E reimbursable foster care placement where youth are provided court oversight and child welfare supervision. The following findings are based on demographic point-in-time data retrieved from the California Child Welfare Indicators Project.

THP+FC participant demographics remain relatively consistent in 2017. As in past years, THP+FC participants are more likely to be female than male (58% vs. 42%). As of April 1, 2017, ethnic/racial demographics have shifted slightly from the year prior. The proportion of youth supervised by the juvenile probation system remained consistent with the previous year, however, has increased from 13 percent in 2013 to 18 percent in 2017. (Figure 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>42%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>58%</td>
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<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/ Pacific Islander</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 Assembly Bill (AB) 12 (Beall, Bass) was signed into law September 30, 2010 and took effect beginning January 1, 2012. [http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/09-10/bill/asm/ab_0001-0050/ab_12_bill_20100930_chaptered.pdf](http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/09-10/bill/asm/ab_0001-0050/ab_12_bill_20100930_chaptered.pdf)
The number of youth placed in THP+FC continues to increase. The number of non-minor dependents (NMDs) placed in THP+FC has increased each year since 2012, when the placement became available as an option for youth participating in extended foster care. Since then, the number of NMDs placed in THP+FC has increased to 1,661 as of April 1, 2017, an 8 percent increase from 2016. (Figure 2)

**FIGURE 2: NUMBER OF NON-MINOR DEPENDENTS PLACED IN THP+FC AS OF APRIL 1ST**

![Bar chart showing the number of non-minor dependents placed in THP+FC from 2013 to 2017.](chart)

3 Data was retrieved from the California Child Welfare Indicators Project, [http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare/](http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare/) using point-in-time data on April 1 of each corresponding year.
The proportion of non-minor dependents placed in THP+FC continues to increase. In addition to an increase in the number of NMDs placed in THP+FC, the proportion of NMDs who are placed in THP+FC as compared to other placements also continued to grow. Nearly one in five NMDs (19%) were placed in THP+FC as of April 1, 2017, a figure that has increased from 17 percent the year prior, and from three percent in 2013. (Figure 3)

![FIGURE 3: PROPORTION OF NMDS PLACED IN THP+FC^4](image)

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^4 Data was retrieved from the California Child Welfare Indicators Project, [http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare/](http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare/) using point-in-time data on April 1 of each corresponding year.
THP-Plus

The Transitional Housing Placement Plus (THP-Plus) program was created by the California State Legislature in 2001 in response to the alarming rate of homelessness among former foster youth. The program was first implemented in 2005. THP-Plus provides safe, affordable housing and supportive services to former foster and probation youth, ages 18 to 24 for up to 24 months. In counties that have opted into the THP-Plus extension established by SB 1252, THP-Plus providers may serve youth who are enrolled in school for up to 36 months and up to age 25. The following findings are based on demographic data retrieved from the THP-Plus Participant Tracking System on youth who entered THP-Plus programs from April 1, 2016 through March 31, 2017.

Overall, the profile of youth participating in THP-Plus remained relatively consistent with recent years. The demographic profile of youth participating in the THP-Plus program is relatively consistent in 2016-17 as compared with previous years. As in past years, there are more young women participating in THP-Plus than young men (56% vs. 44%) and one in 10 participants self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning (LGBTQ). One notable change is the slight shift in ethnic/racial demographics from 2015-16 to 2016-17: an increase in those youth who identify as Hispanic, from 42 percent to 46 percent; an increase in those youth who identify as multi-racial or other, from 36 percent to 44 percent; and a decrease in those youth who identify as White, from 28 percent to 22 percent. (Figure 4)

The proportion of older youth in THP-Plus continues to increase. The percentage of participants aged 21 to 24 continues to increase, from 33 percent in 2011-12 to 87 percent in 2016-17. (Figure 4)

The proportion of youth supervised by the juvenile probation system has decreased by more than half over the last five years. A notable change in the demographics of THP-Plus participants is a considerable, consistent decrease in the percentage of participants who are referred to THP-Plus from the juvenile probation system, which has drifted down incrementally from 15 percent in 2011-12 to six percent in 2016-17. (Figure 4)

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FIGURE 4: THP-PLUS PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS AT ENTRANCE TO THE PROGRAM*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 18 to 20</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 21 to 24</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>87%</td>
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<tr>
<td>LGBTQ</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-racial or other</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic ethnicity</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILP-eligible probation</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding
HOUSING

How long do youth remain in the THP+FC and THP-Plus programs?

On average, youth in both programs do not utilize their full eligibility. Of youth who exited a THP+FC program over 2016-17, the average length of stay was 430 days, or slightly over 14 months. This is roughly 40 percent of the three years a youth is eligible for THP+FC, provided he or she complies with the participation requirements of extended foster care.

Of youth who exited a THP-Plus program over 2016-17, the average length of stay was 398 days, or slightly over 13 months. This figure is an increase from 389 days in 2015-16 and from 362 days in 2014-15. As with THP+FC, this average length of program duration is considerably less than the full program duration, which is 24 months generally and 36 months in the 21 counties that have opted into the THP-Plus extension established by SB 1252, for youth enrolled in school. (Figure 5)

**FIGURE 5: AVERAGE LENGTH OF STAY VS. FULL PROGRAM DURATION**

- **THP+FC**
  - Average length of stay: 14.1 months
  - Full program duration: 36 months

- **THP-Plus**
  - Average length of stay: 13.1 months
  - Full program duration: 24 months
  - Full program duration in counties with THP-Plus extension: 36 months
How many youth are being involuntarily discharged from the THP+FC and THP-Plus programs?

At least one-third of all exits are involuntary. Of youth who exited a THP+FC or THP-Plus program over 2016-17, 33 percent of youth in THP+FC and 36 percent in THP-Plus were involuntarily discharged (Figure 6). An involuntary discharge is an exit based on program non-compliance. Involuntary exits can result in legal evictions, however, the vast majority do not. Over 2016-17, seven percent of involuntary exits in THP+FC resulted in legal evictions, and just three percent in THP-Plus.

More than one in five involuntary exits from THP+FC were likely unrelated to extended foster care participation conditions. Of youth who were involuntarily discharged from a THP+FC program over 2016-17, 23 percent were working and/or in school at exit. This means that they were likely not discharged as a result of failing to meet participation conditions for extended foster care. In THP-Plus, 38 percent of youth who were involuntarily discharged were working and/or in school at exit.

According to Welfare & Institutions Code § 11403(b)(5) and All County Letters 11-61 and 11-69, youth who are otherwise eligible for extended foster care must meet one of the following participation criteria in order to continue to receive the benefits and services of extended foster care:

1. Completing high school or equivalent program (i.e. GED)
2. Enrolled in college, community college or a vocational education program at least half-time
3. Participating in a program or activity designed to remove barriers to employment
4. Employed at least 80 hours per month
5. Unable to do one of the above requirements because of a documented medical condition
Where do youth live once they exit THP+FC and THP-Plus?

Upon exit from both programs, the most common exit is to a setting where youth pay rent. Of youth who exited a THP+FC or THP-Plus program over 2016-17, the most common exit was to rent their own or shared housing, paying rent. A total of 42 percent of youth in THP-Plus exited to this setting and 30 percent of youth in THP+FC exited to this setting. The second most common exit for youth in both programs was to live with a relative or other individual, rent-free. A total of 20 percent of youth in THP+FC and 35 percent in THP-Plus exited to this setting.

In the THP+FC program, one in five youth (20%) who exited went to a different foster care placement, with the majority (65%) exiting to a Supervised Independent Living Placement (SILP). Despite their eligibility for the program, just 14 percent of youth who exited THP+FC in 2016-17 moved to a THP-Plus program.

Six percent of youth in THP+FC and nine percent in THP-Plus exited to an emergency shelter, homelessness, or other unstable housing. (Figure 7)

FIGURE 7: WHERE YOUTH EXITED TO FROM THP+FC & THP-PLUS OVER 2016-17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing Type</th>
<th>THP+FC</th>
<th>THP-Plus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A THP-Plus program</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A THP+FC program</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervised Independent Living Placement</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster care placement (other than THP+FC or SILP)</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other supportive transitional housing program</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renting own / shared housing (paying rent)</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living with relative / other person in stable housing (free rent)</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency shelter, homeless, or other unstable housing (street, car, couch-surfing, etc.)</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incarcerated</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Dorm</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Education

Overall, how are youth in THP+FC and THP-Plus faring in educational attainment?

Most youth in both programs enter with a high school diploma. Of youth who exited a THP+FC program over 2016-17, 70 percent of youth had completed high school or received their General Education Diploma (GED)/High School Equivalency Certificate when they entered the program. In THP-Plus, this figure is slightly higher, with 78 percent of participants having entered the program with this minimum academic credential or higher. (Figure 8)

**FIGURE 8: HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION RATES FOR THP+FC & THP-PLUS PARTICIPANTS WHO EXITED PROGRAMS OVER 2016-17**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Status</th>
<th>THP+FC</th>
<th>THP-Plus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Entrance</td>
<td>Exit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth has not earned their high school diploma, GED or high school equivalent</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth has earned their high school diploma, GED or high school equivalent or higher</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The percentage of youth with a high school diploma or higher increases during program participation. At exit from both programs, the percentage of youth with a high school diploma or higher increased. Among youth in THP+FC, this percentage rose from 70 percent to 78 percent, and for THP-Plus participants, from 78 percent to 81 percent. (Figure 8)

Between entrance and exit, the percentage of youth in both programs who have dropped out of college doubles. At entrance to THP+FC, six percent of youth reported that their current educational status was that they had dropped out of college, a figure that more than doubled to 15 percent by their exit from the program. Similarly, in THP-Plus, nine percent of youth reported that their current educational status was that they had dropped out of college, a figure that increased to 18 percent at program exit.

In THP+FC, the overall rate of college enrollment drops between entrance to and exit from the program. At entrance to THP+FC, 21 percent of participants were enrolled in a two-year
college and two percent in a four-year college, totaling 23 percent. At exit, 18 percent of participants were enrolled in a two-year college and four percent in a four-year college, a total of 22 percent. While the overall rate of college enrollment dropped from 23 percent to 22 percent, the percentage of youth enrolled in four-year colleges increased slightly, from two percent to four percent. (Figure 9)

There is a modest increase in college achievement between entrance and exit in THP-Plus. In THP-Plus, some college achievement is occurring between entrance and exit. At entrance to the program, 18 percent of youth were enrolled in a two-year college and four percent in a four-year college. Additionally, one percent entered THP-Plus already having achieved their associate’s degree. Combined, this totals 23 percent of youth entering THP-Plus either holding an associate’s degree or enrolled in a two- or four-year college. At exit from the program, the percentage that was attending a two-year college increased to 19 percent while the percentage attending a four-year college decreased to two percent. In addition, at exit, a total of two percent reported having received their associate’s degree and two percent their bachelor’s degree. Combined, this totals 25 percent of youth in THP-Plus exiting either enrolled in college or having achieved their degree. (Figure 9)

**FIGURE 9: POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION ATTENDANCE & COMPLETION RATES OF THP+FC & THP-PLUS PARTICIPANTS WHO EXITED PROGRAMS OVER 2016-17**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Status</th>
<th>THP+FC</th>
<th></th>
<th>THP-Plus</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Entrance</td>
<td>Exit</td>
<td>Entrance</td>
<td>Exit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending 2-year community college</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received AA / AS</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending 4-year college / university</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received BA / BS</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Are those youth attending school also working?

Approximately half of youth attending school are simultaneously employed. Of youth who exited THP+FC during 2016-17, 48 percent of youth attending school at entrance to the program were also employed. This same percentage of school-attending participants were also working in THP-Plus when they entered the program. In both THP+FC and THP-Plus, the percentage of school-attending participants who were working at exit increased to 55 percent.

Employment & Income

Overall, how are youth in THP+FC and THP-Plus faring in employment?

THP+FC and THP-Plus participants make gains in employment between entrance to and exit from the program. Youth who exited a THP+FC program over 2016-17 experienced an increase in their rate of employment, from 27 percent at entrance to 39 percent at exit. Youth who exited a THP-Plus program over 2016-17 experienced an increase in their rate of employment, from 39 percent at entrance to 50 percent at exit. (Figure 10)

The percentage of employed youth who were working full-time also increased in both programs between entrance to and exit from the program: in THP+FC from 34 to 46 percent, and in THP-Plus from 43 to 54 percent.

The average hourly wage of employed THP+FC and THP-Plus participants increases between entrance to and exit from the program. Employed youth who exited a THP+FC program in 2016-17 on average experienced an eight percent increase in their hourly wage. At entrance, THP+FC participants who were working
earned an average hourly wage of $10.70, and exited with an average hourly wage of $11.52. Employed youth who exited a THP-Plus program over 2016-17 on average experienced a 10 percent increase in their hourly wage. At entrance, these participants earned an average hourly wage of $10.52, and exited with an average hourly wage of $11.62.

**THP+FC and THP-Plus participants experience an increase in monthly income between entrance to and exit from the program.** Youth who exited a THP+FC program in 2016-17 on average experienced a 25 percent increase in their monthly income, which included wages, public benefits, financial aid, child support, family member contributions, informal work, a stipend received from the program, or any other sources of financial support. At entrance, THP+FC participants had an average monthly income of $942, and exited with an average monthly income of $1,180. This is the equivalent increase in annual income from $11,304 to $14,160.

Youth who exited a THP-Plus program during 2016-17 on average experienced a 20 percent increase in their monthly income from entrance to exit, from $945 to $1,130 per month ($11,340 to $13,560 per year).

While gains in income and employment are encouraging, it is important to note that these annual incomes are below or just above the Federal Poverty Lines for 2017 which are $12,060 for one-person and $16,240 for two-person households.

**Are parenting youth working?**

**Parenting youth are more likely to be working when compared to their non-parenting peers.** Of youth who exited a THP-Plus program as custodial parents over 2016-17, 58 percent were employed at exit from the program, compared to 49 percent of non-parenting youth.
Emily entered the foster care system at the age of 12. From an early age, Emily knew she must work hard to accomplish the life she envisioned for herself, and never wanted to depend on others—especially financially.

Although Emily had an amazing inner drive, life was not easy. Shuffled around multiple placements before ending up at a group home, she witnessed some of her peers age out of foster care and into homelessness. Emily's determination to succeed, combined with her luck of turning 18 the same year that extended foster care was implemented, landed her in a THP+FC program in Butte County called Youth for Change.

“*My counselor encouraged me to finish what I started. She helped me realize the value of completing my degree.*”

Emily's relationship with her THP+FC case manager was close and supportive. “I never expected the relationship to be so pivotal for my future,” said Emily. After her case manager told her about the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) at Chico State University, Emily received support and guidance from an EOP counselor who helped her through the application and enrollment process. This connection proved to be essential during her college years when Emily had doubts about finishing her degree. “My counselor encouraged me to finish what I started. She helped me realize the value of completing my degree,” she said.

Emily was able to secure financial aid for college, including a Chafee Grant, while also being supported by the THP+FC program. Despite this support, Emily, who never wanted to depend on others financially, insisted on working. After trying to balance full-time work and school, she realized that it was in her best interest to lessen her work schedule to part-time while she was in a supported environment. “With the support [of extended foster care and the THP+FC program], I could go to the library and study instead of having to work late all the time.” Emily advises other youth to take advantage of the support while they have it.

Seeking a change of pace during her sophomore year, Emily transferred to an out-of-state college. Although her Chafee Grant followed her, her THP+FC program could not. Emily opted not to identify as a foster youth on this new campus and so she did not receive the on-campus support that may have been available. Without support from the campus or from a THP+FC program, and with the cost of out-of-state tuition, she made a wise decision to return to Chico State and to Youth for Change's THP+FC program.

After five years of attending college, Emily graduated in May 2017 with a Bachelor's Degree in Kinesiology.

Emily is now faced with a great decision—accept a well-paid position that has been offered to her in her field, or continue on to graduate school where she hopes to earn a Master's Degree in Education and become a Director of Admissions at an institution of higher education to provide support, guidance, and encouragement to those who come from disadvantaged backgrounds. Emily offers advice to her peers: “Don’t give up. Finish your education because it will open up doors.”

Youth for Change is located in Butte County, and is a THP-Plus and THP+FC provider. Youth for Change recently participated in a pilot project led by John Burton Advocates for Youth to increase transitional housing providers’ capacities to support youth in post-secondary education.
Health & Well-Being

Do youth in THP-Plus have health insurance?

Youth in THP-Plus are enrolled in health insurance. Of youth who exited a THP-Plus program over 2016-17, nearly all youth (99%) reported being enrolled in health insurance upon exit from the program. The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act provides former foster youth free health insurance until the age of 26. In California, youth under age 26 are eligible for Medi-Cal benefits if they were in foster care in any state at age 18 or older. The coverage includes medical care, vision exams, substance abuse treatment, mental health services and counseling, and dental care. All youth participating in THP+FC are automatically covered by Medi-Cal because they are dependents of the child welfare or juvenile probation systems.

Are youth connected to mental health services upon exit from THP+FC and THP-Plus?

More than one in four youth in THP+FC and more than one in five in THP-Plus are accessing mental health services upon exit from the program. Of youth who exited a THP+FC or THP-Plus program over 2016-17, 27 percent of youth in THP+FC and 21 percent in THP-Plus were accessing mental health services upon exit from the program. Additionally, a small number of youth were being treated for substance abuse (5% in THP+FC and 4% in THP-Plus).

Are youth connected to public benefits upon exit from THP+FC and THP-Plus?

CalFresh is the most commonly accessed public benefit among THP+FC and THP-Plus participants. Of youth who exited a program over 2016-17, 16 percent of THP+FC participants and more than one third (36%) of THP-Plus participants were accessing CalFresh benefits (food stamps) upon exit. Other public benefits youth receive include: the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) (11% in THP+FC and 9% in THP-Plus); California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) (9% in THP-Plus); and subsidized child care (just 2% in both THP+FC and THP-Plus).

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7 HR 3590, 111th Cong. (2010)
How many parenting youth are participating in THP+FC and THP-Plus?

A significant number of youth are becoming parents while they are in THP+FC and THP-Plus. Of youth who exited a THP+FC program over 2016-17, the proportion who were custodial parents increased from 13 percent at entrance to 21 percent upon exit from the program. This trend was even more profound among THP-Plus participants. Of youth who exited a THP-Plus program, 16 percent were custodial parents upon entrance to the program, and upon exit this figure jumped to 26 percent.

This trend is illuminated when considering gender-specific data. Of young women who exited a THP+FC program over 2016-17, the proportion who were custodial mothers increased from 21 percent at entrance to 34 percent upon exit from the program. In THP-Plus the proportion of custodial mothers increased from 26 percent at entrance to 40 percent at exit.8 (Figure 11)

FIGURE 11: CUSTODIAL MOTHERS

8 In previous annual reports, data on custodial mothers was presented for the fiscal year, July 1 to June 30. This report presents the data from April 1 to March 31, which differs from the fiscal year data.
Some youth enter THP+FC and THP-Plus programs as non-custodial parents. Some youth indicate that they have previously given birth to or fathered a child, but their child is not residing with them. Of youth who exited a THP+FC program over 2016-17, 11 percent who indicated they had given birth to or fathered a child prior to entering the program were not custodial parents at program entrance. In THP-Plus, 30 percent of youth who indicated they had given birth to or fathered a child prior to entering a THP-Plus program were not custodial parents at entrance.

Youth who enter the program as parents are more likely to have another child during the program when compared to their peers who entered without children. Of those THP+FC participants who were custodial parents at entrance, 35 percent gave birth to or fathered a new child during their time in the program, while only seven percent of those who were not custodial parents at entrance had a new child during their time in the program. Of those THP-Plus participants who were custodial parents at entrance, 29 percent gave birth to or fathered a new child during their time in the program, while only 11 percent of youth who were not custodial parents at entrance had a new child during their time in the program.
Homelessness

How many youth in THP+FC and THP-Plus have experienced homelessness?

More than half of the youth in THP-Plus have experienced homelessness prior to entering the program, and nearly a third enter the program directly from homelessness or unstable housing. A full 25 percent of youth who exited THP+FC over 2016-17 and 52 percent of youth who exited THP-Plus over 2016-17 had experienced homelessness prior to entering the program. Further, eight percent of youth who entered THP+FC and 31 percent of youth who entered THP-Plus did so directly from homelessness or other unstable housing. For youth in THP-Plus, this is an increase from the year prior, and represents a significant increase since 2010-11 in both the percentage of youth who have ever experienced homelessness between foster care and entering THP-Plus, and the percentage who enter the program directly from homelessness or unstable housing. (Figure 12)

**FIGURE 12: YOUTH WHO EXPERIENCED HOMELESSNESS PRIOR TO ENTERING THP-PLUS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>% Experienced Homelessness Between Foster Care and THP-Plus</th>
<th>% Entered THP-Plus Directly from Emergency Shelter, Homelessness, or Other Unstable Housing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>39%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>46%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>28%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9 Homelessness or other unstable housing is defined in the Participant Tracking Systems as “emergency shelter, homelessness, or other unstable housing (i.e. street, car, couch-surfing, etc.).”
Is previous experience with homelessness associated with other risk factors?

Youth who enter THP-Plus directly from homelessness or unstable housing may be more likely to experience homelessness upon exit from the program. Nine percent of all youth who exited THP-Plus over 2016-17 exited to homelessness or unstable housing. However, of the youth who entered THP-Plus directly from homelessness or unstable housing, 14 percent exited to homelessness or unstable housing.

Youth who enter a THP+FC program as custodial parents may be more likely to have experienced homelessness prior to entering. Of youth who entered a THP+FC program as custodial parents over 2016-17, 30 percent had experienced homelessness prior to entering the program, compared to 24 percent of non-parenting youth.

THP-Plus participants that enter the program directly from homelessness or unstable housing may be more likely to be parents at entrance to the program and to become new parents or have subsequent children during the program. Youth who entered a THP-Plus program directly from homelessness or unstable housing were slightly more likely to have given birth to or fathered a child (32%) and more likely to be custodial parents (18%) at entrance to the program, when compared to youth who entered the program from stable housing (29% and 16% respectively). Youth who entered a THP-Plus program directly from homelessness or unstable housing were also slightly more likely to have a new child between entrance and exit (16%) when compared to youth who entered the program from stable housing (14%). (Figure 13)
Youth who enter THP-Plus directly from homelessness or unstable housing may be more likely to be involved with the criminal justice system. Youth who entered a THP-Plus program directly from homelessness or unstable housing were more likely to have been detained or incarcerated\(^1\) prior to entering the program (28%) when compared to participants who entered the program from stable housing (10%), and were more likely to be detained or incarcerated during the program (19%) when compared to those who entered the program from stable housing (12%).

Youth who entered THP-Plus directly from homelessness or unstable housing were also more likely to have been convicted of a misdemeanor prior to entering (9%) and during the program (10%), when compared to participants who entered the program from stable housing (6% prior and 6% during). Those who entered THP-Plus directly from homelessness or unstable housing were also more likely to have been convicted of a felony prior to entering (11%) and

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\(^1\) In the Participant Tracking Systems, “detained or incarcerated” is defined as “held in a jail or other detention facility for any period of time, even if not ultimately charged or convicted.”
during (5%) the program when compared to participants who entered the program from stable housing (3% prior and 2% during). (Figure 14)

**FIGURE 14: CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM INVOLVEMENT FOR YOUTH ENTERING THP-PLUS FROM STABLE HOUSING VS. HOMELESSNESS OR UNSTABLE HOUSING**

- % of detained or incarcerated prior to entering program
- % of detained or incarcerated during program
- % of youth convicted of misdemeanor prior to entering program
- % of youth convicted of misdemeanor during program
- % of youth convicted of felony prior to entering program
- % of youth convicted of felony during program

- Entered from stable housing
- Entered from homelessness or unstable housing
Involvement with the Criminal Justice System

How many youth in THP+FC and THP-Plus are involved with the adult criminal justice system?

Approximately one in eight youth in THP+FC and THP-Plus are detained and/or incarcerated during their time in the program. Of those youth who exited a THP+FC program over 2016-17, none had been detained and/or incarcerated or convicted of a crime in the adult criminal justice system prior to entering the program. Upon exit, 13 percent had been detained and/or incarcerated, five percent had been convicted of a misdemeanor, and two percent had been convicted of a felony during their time in the program. (Figure 15)

Of those youth who exited a THP-Plus program during 2016-17, 16 percent had been detained and/or incarcerated, seven percent had been convicted of a misdemeanor, and five percent had been convicted of a felony in the adult criminal justice system prior to entering the program. Upon exit, 13 percent had been detained and/or incarcerated, seven percent had been convicted of a misdemeanor and three percent had been convicted of a felony during their time in the program. (Figure 15)

**FIGURE 15: ADULT CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM INVOLVEMENT AMONG THP+FC & THP-PLUS PARTICIPANTS**
Youth supervised by the juvenile probation system are considerably more likely to be involved with the adult criminal justice system than youth supervised by the child welfare system. Of those youth supervised by the juvenile probation system who exited a THP+FC program over 2016-17, 26 percent were detained and/or incarcerated while in the program. This is more than double the rate (11%) for youth supervised by the child welfare system. A total of 17 percent of probation-supervised youth received a misdemeanor conviction compared to just 3 percent of child welfare-supervised youth during the program. The exception is with the rate of felony convictions: Two percent of probation-supervised youth received a felony conviction while in the program, which is consistent with the rate of child welfare-supervised youth. (Figure 16)

Of those youth who exited a THP-Plus program over 2016-17, the rate of involvement with the adult criminal justice system was higher for youth formerly supervised by the juvenile probation system across all three measures. More than one in five (22%) youth formerly supervised by the juvenile probation system were detained and/or incarcerated during their time in the program, compared to 13 percent formerly supervised by the child welfare system. Nearly one in 10 (9%) youth formerly supervised by juvenile probation received a misdemeanor conviction during their time in the program, compared to six percent formerly supervised by child welfare; and 15 percent of youth formerly supervised by probation received a felony conviction during their time in the program, compared to just two percent of youth formerly supervised by child welfare. (Figure 16)
FIGURE 16: RATES OF ADULT CRIMINAL JUSTICE INVOLVEMENT
PROBATION-SUPERVISED YOUTH VS. CHILD WELFARE-SUPERVISED YOUTH

THP+FC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Detained/Incarcerated</th>
<th>Misdemeanor</th>
<th>Felony Conviction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Detained/Incarcerated</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misdemeanor</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

THP-Plus

<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
<th>Detained/Incarcerated</th>
<th>Misdemeanor</th>
<th>Felony Conviction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Detained/Incarcerated</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misdemeanor</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Youth Supervised by Probation

Youth Supervised by Child Welfare
Bill Wilson Center in Santa Clara, California has been providing housing, counseling, advocacy, and supportive services to runaway and homeless youth since 1973. They began providing THP-Plus in 2007 when Santa Clara County first implemented the program, and added THP+FC to their repertoire in 2012 when the program was established as a placement option for non-minor dependents.

Bill Wilson Center currently serves 62 youth in THP-Plus and 28 youth in THP+FC, one quarter of which are custodial parents. The program offers a uniquely robust set of services for their young parents, including a monthly parenting support group, intensive case management that focuses on the needs of the child and family, and therapy services for the family including Parent Child Interactive Therapy. This is possible with the support of Santa Clara County which provides a $400 higher THP-Plus rate for parenting youth to cover the additional costs associated with housing and serving a family as opposed to a single person.

In addition to a thoughtful approach to serving parenting youth, Bill Wilson Center has designed their THP-Plus and THP+FC programs in a manner that encourages and supports post-secondary educational attainment for youth who often do not view themselves as “college material,” who have not been provided adequate academic support or stability throughout their childhood, and are affected by a history of childhood trauma.

Bill Wilson Center has an additional tool in their toolbox by being located in Santa Clara, a county that has opted into the THP-Plus extension. As described earlier in the report, youth enrolled in secondary or post-secondary education are able to remain in their THP-Plus program for an additional 12 months and/or up to age 25. Since implementation, the college enrollment rates of their THP-Plus participants have more than doubled, going from 31 percent in 2014-15 to 67 percent in 2016-17.

Bill Wilson Center believes that participating in John Burton Advocates for Youth’s pilot project to transform THP-Plus and THP+FC providers to go beyond safety net services and become college success programs also contributed to this jump in enrollment. “The project helped us to solidify and strengthen our commitment to education for our youth,” explains Ashley Rarick, the THP-Plus Supervisor. “If we’re doing our job well and we support youth in getting all the financial aid they’re eligible for, including scholarships, maybe they don’t have to work, and can focus all their energy and effort on school.”

Samantha Figueroa, a participant in Bill Wilson Center’s THP-Plus program, can attest to the extra mile the program goes to make college an attainable reality. Samantha graduated high school in 2012, leaving her foster home to attend San Jose State University. After completing her first year, she realized that being entirely independent presents challenges, particularly in the Bay Area where housing costs have soared. Samantha was faced with a harsh reality—if she didn’t seek help, she would become homeless.

Samantha entered Bill Wilson Center’s THP-Plus program during her second year of college, and her life changed. With the support of the program and her case manager, she was able to focus on her education instead of her living situation. “For once I felt like I could be a student, and not worry about monthly rental payments,” she said. “If I did not have the support of Bill Wilson Center, I would have been forced to drop my classes and work full time.” Samantha graduated from San Jose State in four years with a Bachelor’s Degree in Sociology.
POLICY & PRACTICE IMPLICATIONS

Youth in both programs are making limited progress in college.

The percentage of youth enrolled in college decreased from 23 to 22 percent between entrance and exit in THP+FC during 2016-17. In THP-Plus, the percentage of youth enrolled in college or who have achieved a degree increased only modestly between entrance and exit, from 23 to 25 percent. This speaks to the need for new strategies, practice improvements, and policy changes to promote college enrollment and retention for transition-age current and former foster youth in California.

Based on findings from a pilot project led by John Burton Advocates for Youth over 2016-17, THP+FC and THP-Plus providers require training on key topics related to post-secondary education and foster youth, to include: financial aid, the matriculation process, on-campus supports and services, Career and Technical Education (CTE) options, and how to adopt an academic-focused case management model. Providers should also orient their programs to emphasize post-secondary education, and include these practices and policies in their program manuals. Key partners play an important role in ensuring that youth in these programs are enrolling in and persisting in college, including foster youth campus support programs at the local colleges, the county office of education, and the county child welfare agency.

Additional effort is required to prevent unintended pregnancy in THP+FC and THP-Plus, particularly repeat pregnancies.

In both programs, the percentage of young women who are custodial mothers increases considerably during their program participation, from 21 to 34 percent in THP+FC and 26 to 40 percent in THP-Plus. Given this, it is important to ensure that reproductive health care is a central element of case management, and that youth are provided information and access to reproductive health care that can prevent unintended pregnancy. This is particularly important for youth who enter the programs as parents, as the data show that they are more likely to have a subsequent child during their time in the program.

The 2017-18 California State Budget included $2.8 million to reduce the rate of unintended pregnancy among foster youth. This investment: (1) requires social workers to document that
foster youth receive the state-mandated comprehensive sexual health curriculum provided in public schools; (2) requires social workers to document that they have informed foster youth of their reproductive rights, and how to access reproductive health care and address barriers to access; and (3) requires training for child welfare professionals and caregivers on how to engage with youth about healthy sexual development and the reproductive rights and services available to foster youth.

These new mandates follow the 2016 release of the California Plan for the Prevention of Unintended Pregnancy for Youth and Non-Minor Dependents in Foster Care, and guidance to counties related to legislative changes and existing law on the reproductive and sexual health care and related rights of foster youth. It is important that counties and providers are informed about what is required of them so that they can do their part to address the high rate of unintended pregnancy among foster youth, as well as meet legal mandates.

**CalFresh is underutilized by youth in both THP+FC and THP-Plus.**

Despite the high likelihood of eligibility, CalFresh is considerably underutilized by youth in both THP+FC and THP-Plus. Just 16 percent of youth in THP+FC are recipients of this important benefit and 36 percent in THP-Plus. Based on the average monthly income of youth in both THP+FC and THP-Plus, the average youth in these programs meet the gross income eligibility requirements, and after applying common deductions, also meet the net eligibility requirements.

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13 According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2016-17, the gross monthly income limits for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) are set at 130% of the poverty level for the household size. For a household size of 1, the gross income limit is $1,287. [https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/snap/FY17-Income-Eligibility-Standards.pdf](https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/snap/FY17-Income-Eligibility-Standards.pdf)

14 According to the USDA, for FFY 2016-17, the net monthly income limits for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program are set at 100% of the poverty level for the household size. For a household size of 1, the net income limit is $990. [https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/snap/FY17-Income-Eligibility-Standards.pdf](https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/snap/FY17-Income-Eligibility-Standards.pdf). According to USDA, SNAP applicants receive a Standard Deduction of $157 for households of 1-3 for FFY 2016-17. Many participants in THP+FC and THP-Plus will qualify for at least one additional deduction, such as the Earned Income Deduction, the Standard Utility Deduction, or the Dependent Care Deduction. [https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/eligibility#Deductions](https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/eligibility#Deductions)
recent policy guidance provided by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) states that current and former foster youth participating in extended foster care and a number of other programs are exempted from the student restrictions on CalFresh eligibility.\(^\text{15}\) Given this likelihood of eligibility for many youth in THP+FC and THP-Plus, considerable effort must be made on the policy and practice level to ensure access to CalFresh.

CDSS is currently developing guidance for counties regarding foster youth applying for CalFresh. Building upon the initial CalFresh Program Request for Policy/Regulation Interpretation\(^\text{16}\) discussing how to count income for youth in THP+FC and THP-Plus, and the recent All County Letter\(^\text{17}\) discussing exemptions to student restrictions from CalFresh eligibility, the forthcoming guidance should contribute to increased access to CalFresh for youth participating in both THP+FC and THP-Plus by ensuring counties are fully informed about eligibility and how to count income. Providers should ensure that they are aware of this information as well so that they can assist youth in navigating any obstacles that may remain in some counties.

**Youth are not participating in the full length of the THP+FC and THP-Plus programs.**

Currently, the average length of participation in both programs is far less than the full length of the programs. On average, youth in THP+FC participate in the program for 40 percent of the full program length of two years. Youth in THP-Plus are only utilizing an average of 55 percent of the full program length of two years, or an average of just 36 percent in counties that have extended eligibility to three years for youth enrolled in school. With California facing a housing crisis, there are few affordable options for youth who exit THP+FC and THP-Plus. Given that, there is an opportunity to support youth by helping them access the full duration of the program.

For those providers and counties who are not already cognizant of their program’s average length of stay, awareness must be developed about how providers and/or counties might be

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contributing to, or deterring youth from, accessing the THP+FC and THP-Plus programs for the full program duration, and analysis performed regarding the reasons why youth may be prematurely exiting the programs.

One approach to address this issue includes the implementation of a Housing First model in both THP+FC and THP-Plus, which has been shown to increase the length of time an individual is safely housed by lowering barriers for participation. Housing First is an approach to quickly and successfully connect individuals and families experiencing homelessness to housing without preconditions and barriers to entry, such as sobriety, treatment or service participation requirements. Based on the evidence supporting Housing First, the California State Legislature adopted SB 1380 (Mitchell), which went into effect on January 1, 2017. This policy establishes the Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council to oversee the implementation of the Housing First guidelines and regulations in housing programs funded by the State of California.

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The high rate of involuntary exits is a cause for alarm.

Involuntary exits from both programs are too high, with 33 percent of youth being involuntarily discharged from THP+FC and 36 percent from THP-Plus. These high rates raise important questions about whether the requirements of programs are aligned with the needs of participating youth. For THP+FC in particular, it raises questions as to whether additional requirements are being applied to youth, above and beyond the five participation conditions of extended foster care, and if so, whether those additional requirements are consistent with state law.

In 2017, five years after the implementation of extended foster care, it is timely, as a state, to ask whether extended foster care is “working,” and for whom. THP+FC was developed as a placement option for higher-needs youth, including those transitioning from congregate care. Questions remain about whether the program has the capacity—based on a foster care rate that is significantly lower than congregate care rates—to provide the services and supports necessary to meet the needs of a higher-risk population. Extended foster care is intended to support foster youth in a successful transition to adulthood, regardless of whether they are self-sufficient or require a higher level of support. That being said, further investigation is necessary to determine whether youth with higher needs are being disproportionately discharged from extended foster care, and whether evaluation of their eligibility—particularly whether they meet the criteria of having a medical or mental health condition exempting them from participation conditions—is being adequately conducted.

Youth who have experienced homelessness face unique risk factors.

Youth who have experienced homelessness face unique risk factors that make them more likely to experience homelessness again. Just nine percent of all youth who exited a THP-Plus program over 2016-17 exited to homelessness or unstable housing. However, of the youth who entered THP-Plus directly from homelessness or unstable housing, 14 percent exited back to it. Youth who entered THP-Plus directly from homelessness or unstable housing are also more likely to become pregnant, have children during the program, and be involved with the criminal justice system. Given this vulnerability to adverse outcomes, youth who enter THP+FC and THP-Plus with a history of homelessness—particularly those who enter the programs directly from homelessness or unstable housing—must be provided maximum supports and services to ensure a stable housing
plan is in place upon exit from the program, with special attention to helping youth prevent unintended pregnancy, and providing support for parents and guidance about decision-making that lessens the likelihood of involvement with the criminal justice system.

**Youth participating in extended foster care are experiencing homelessness.**

Twenty-five percent of THP+FC participants experienced homelessness prior to entering the program, and eight percent entered the program directly from an emergency shelter, homelessness, or other unstable housing, which makes them at higher risk for homelessness at exit from the program. At 30 percent, the rate of homelessness prior to entry to THP+FC is even higher for youth who enter the program as custodial parents. These data speak to the need for additional efforts to ensure current foster youth make smooth, supported transitions between foster care placements. It is critical that counties ensure that a viable placement option is available for every non-minor dependent, as required by law.

**Youth in THP+FC require additional support to access THP-Plus.**

When youth exit the THP+FC program, just one in eight (14%) move into a THP-Plus program, despite their eligibility for the program. At the current time, it is not clear why that is the case. While some counties are making full use of their THP-Plus Realignment Allocation and have waiting lists, several counties are not fully utilizing this allocation, so waiting lists should not exist in these counties.\(^{19}\) Particularly in counties with available THP-Plus funding, more must be done to ensure a supported transition.

**Juvenile probation system supervised youth are at risk for adult criminal justice involvement.**

Youth supervised by the juvenile probation system are considerably more likely to experience adult criminal justice involvement during participation in the program when compared to youth supervised by the child welfare system. Of those youth supervised by the juvenile probation

system who exited a THP+FC program over 2016-17, 26 percent were detained and/or incarcerated while in the program, compared to just 11 percent of youth supervised by the child welfare system. A total of 17 percent of probation-supervised youth in THP+FC received a misdemeanor conviction compared to just three percent of child welfare-supervised youth.

In THP-Plus, 22 percent of youth formerly supervised by the juvenile probation system were detained and/or incarcerated during their time in the program, compared to 13 percent of youth supervised by the child welfare system. A total of 15 percent of probation-supervised youth in THP-Plus received a felony conviction compared to just two percent of child welfare-supervised youth. It is critical that providers and counties are aware of this heightened risk, and that supports are in place targeting youth supervised by the juvenile probation system to help prevent their engagement with the adult criminal justice system.

Youth are transitioning out of THP+FC and THP-Plus programs with very low incomes.

Although on average, youth who are working are experiencing an increase in their hourly wage between entrance and exit in both THP+FC and THP-Plus, just 39 percent in THP+FC and 50 percent in THP-Plus are working at exit. Those working are still exiting both programs earning just a dollar over the state’s 2017 minimum wage of $10.50, and less than many local ordinance minimum wages. On average, the annual income of youth (both of those employed and not employed) at exit from THP+FC ($14,160) and THP-Plus ($13,560) is not far above the Federal Poverty Level of $12,060 per year. This is particularly concerning in California where the cost of living is 92.7 percent higher than the nation’s average.20

Providers play an important role in guiding youth in low-paying jobs toward the Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs offered at California’s community colleges. For youth who do not plan on pursuing a degree, these short-term programs can be realistic paths to living-wage jobs or careers.

# THP+FC & THP-PLUS HISTORY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>2001</td>
<td>AB 427 establishes THP-Plus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>3 counties implement THP-Plus.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Eligibility extended to age 24, and 5 counties implement THP-Plus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>50 counties implement THP-Plus, and it serves over 2,000 youth for the first time ever over FY 2008-09.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>$5 million budget reduction to THP-Plus for FY 2009-10.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>51 counties implement THP-Plus during FY 2010-11. THP-Plus changes to a county-funded program under the Governor’s 2011 Realignment of Child Welfare Services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>THP-Plus Participant Tracking System is launched.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>THP-Plus budget reduced slightly to $35.4 million for FY 2010-11.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Extended Foster Care is implemented. THP+FC licensing and rate structure is established. THP-Plus is still serving over 2,000 youth annually in 50 counties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>THP-FC serves its first 305 youth over FY 2012-13, with 273 youth in the program as of 7/1/13. Some counties begin to make THP-Plus capacity reductions and the number of youth served annually drops to just above 2,000.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>THP-FC serves over 2,400 youth over FY 2014-15, with 1,436 youth in the program as of 7/1/15. THP-Plus continues on a decline, serving 1,696 youth. The THP+FC Participant Tracking System is launched.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>21 counties implement the THP-Plus extension. The moment-in-time number of youth placed in THP+FC reaches 1,661 as of April 1, 2017.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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