



THP-Plus/FC Monthly Conference Call

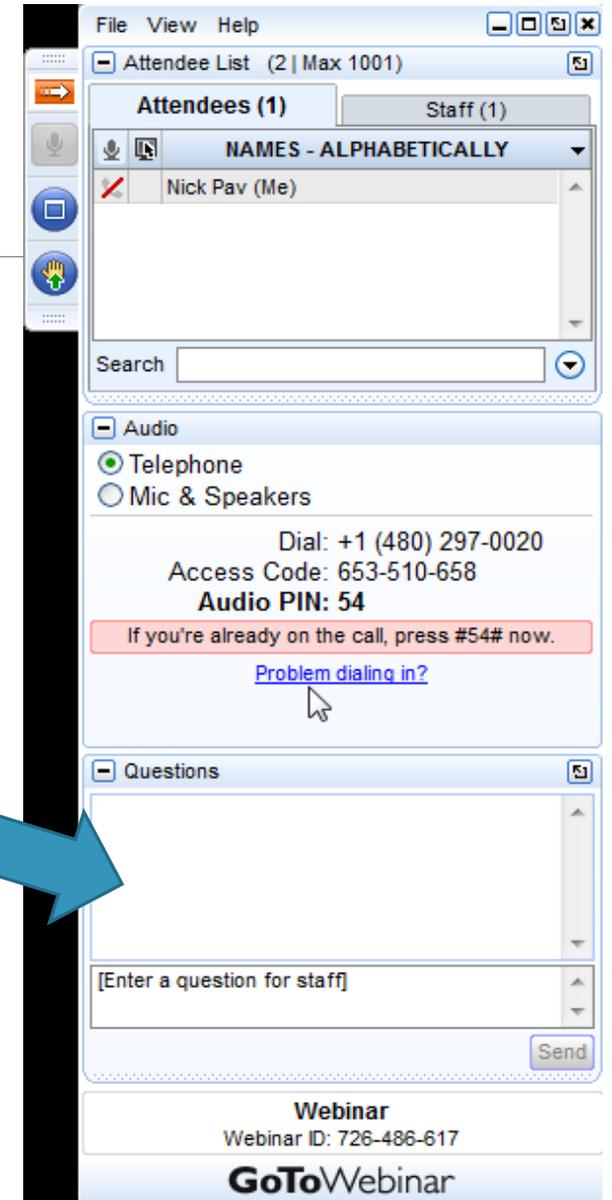
PROPERTY PROCUREMENT & MANAGEMENT TRAINING

THURSDAY, APRIL 9, 2015

Information to Participate

- Call-in number is 1 (702) 489-0008 and access code is 928-441-384.
- Presentation materials and audio will be posted at www.thppplus.org

To submit live questions, click on the “Questions” panel, type your question, and click “Send”



The screenshot displays the GoToWebinar interface. At the top, there is a menu bar with 'File', 'View', and 'Help'. Below it, the 'Attendee List' panel shows 'Attendees (1)' and 'Staff (1)'. The attendees list is sorted by 'NAMES - ALPHABETICALLY' and shows 'Nick Pav (Me)'. A search bar is located below the list. The 'Audio' panel is active, showing 'Telephone' selected and 'Mic & Speakers' unselected. It displays the dial-in number '+1 (480) 297-0020', access code '653-510-658', and audio PIN '54'. A red banner indicates 'If you're already on the call, press #54# now.' and a blue link 'Problem dialing in?' is visible. The 'Questions' panel is at the bottom, with a text input field containing '[Enter a question for staff]' and a 'Send' button. A blue arrow points from the text in the previous block to the 'Questions' panel.

Agenda

- **Policy Updates:** Amy Lemley, John Burton Foundation
- **Property Procurement:** Luis Madrid, Aspiranet
- **Structuring Leases:** Brooke Svalberg-Wells, Youth for Change
- **Property Management:** Bonnie Meyer, BAYC
- **Questions & Answers**

Policy Updates

\$30 million augmentation to THP-Plus

- Was heard in Assembly Budget Subcommittee
- Is being heard in Senate Budget Subcommittee *today*
- Thank you to everyone who has expressed support.

Senate Bill 1252

- ACIN is in its final stages of approval
- Includes definition of “participate” that is consistent with extended foster care

THP+FC Rate & Regulations Workgroup

- Meetings are ongoing

Property Procurement

Luis Madrid, Regional Director

- Began working at Aspiranet Family Foster Agency in 2009
- Worked for the Merced County Child Protective Services Long Term Foster Care Unit prior to 2009
- He was hired by Aspiranet as the THP+ Program Manager for Merced and Stanislaus Counties
- Recently he became the Associate TAY Division Director for Aspiranet.



spiranet

- Operates both THP-Plus and THP+FC in 14 counties:
 - Los Angeles, San Bernardino, Orange, Riverside, Ventura, Kern, Kings, Tulare, Fresno, Madera, Merced, Stanislaus, San Joaquin, Sacramento
- Serves 115 youth in THP-Plus
- Serves 142 youth in THP+FC

Finding the Right Property:



- **Location:**
 - Safe neighborhood
 - Near public transportation
 - Reasonable distance from school/places of employment
- **Truly “Scattered” Sites:**
 - Strategically acquire sites throughout the county
- **Does it have the type of units your program is seeking?**
 - 1-2 bedroom units

Where to look for property?

- **Larger Developers in your Area:**
 - Benefits: Getting one person on board can open up the doors to other properties throughout the county
- **Real Estate Agents:**
 - Benefits: May be able to connect you with investors or they may manage properties for investors
- **Housing Authority-Owned property:**
 - Benefits: Oftentimes they are already familiar with low-income, TAY populations

Approaching a landlord:

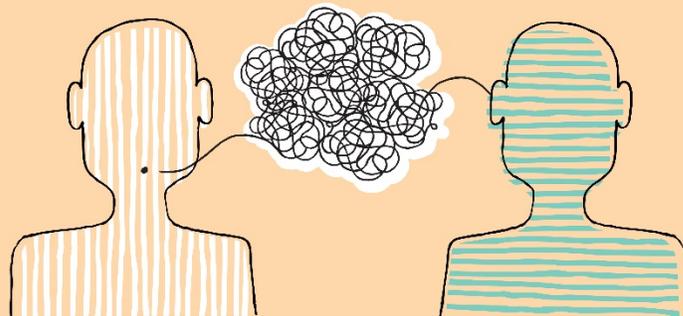


- Do your research on the property and the landlord
- Try to arrange an in-person meeting if possible
- **Come prepared with:**
 - References from other landlords
 - Materials identifying your organization and its mission
 - Business cards

Keep in mind that landlords...

- Are for-profit, business people
- May have limited understanding of foster care/TAY population
- Have a heart and are people too

DO:



DON'T

- **Emphasize that rent is guaranteed**
- Emphasize the organization's role in regular property maintenance
- **Emphasize that the organization is available 24 hours a day to address any concerns and is often on-site with youth**
- Explain the backgrounds and needs of TAY population in a sympathetic way
- **Make it personal**
- Make yourself available for follow-up

- **Open with terms like “probation youth” or “foster youth” initially**
- Assume that they understand what foster youth means
- **Imply that everything is going to be great all the time**
- Imply that the youth will be a difficult tenant

Key Retention Strategies:

- **Respond immediately to concerns from a landlord**
- **Have a constant read on a landlord's tolerance levels:**
 - Keep in mind past experiences when deciding where to place a youth
 - Give the landlord a break by either not using them as much for a while or only assigning very responsible, independent youth to their units for some time after a tenancy crisis/issue
- **Build a relationship that doesn't revolve around resolving emergencies:**
 - Schedule monthly or bi-monthly meetings to see how everything is going
 - Demonstrate gratitude

Indicator of success: when a landlord tells you about a new unit before opening it up to the public

Recruitment & Retention Success Story

Lessons Learned:

- **Face to face conversation is always best.**
 - Eliminate the middle man where possible in initial pitches – speak directly to the owner
- **Find the balance between painting an overly rosy picture and one that could deter a potential landlord.**
- **Educating the county on the program helps to identify strong participants**
 - Not just meant for the cream of the crop, but also not meant for youth who aren't ready to live on their own
- **The work put into maintaining a good relationship with a landlord pays in dividends**

Structuring Leases

3 Types of Leasing Scenarios

Provider as Owner

*Provider
essentially acts
as landlord*

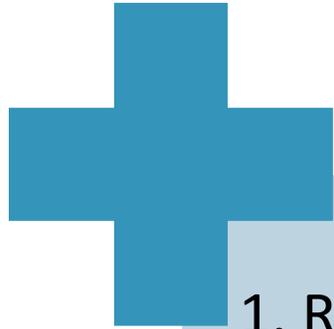
Master Lease

*Agency signs
lease and
subleases to
youth*

Co-Lease

*Both youth and
provider signs
lease*

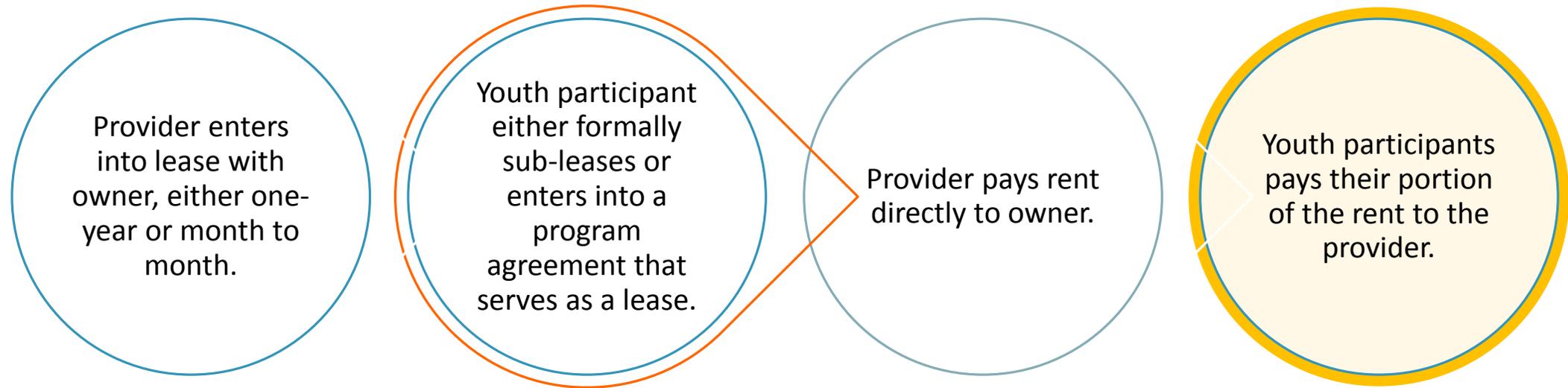
Owning Property



1. Reduces pressure to procure property
2. Controls housing costs
3. If the property is owned, the rate goes farther

1. Costly, requires high level of capital
2. Set location makes it not possible to accommodate needs/preferences of youth.
3. Requires youth to move out of unit at the end of the program

Master Leases



Pros and Cons of Master Leasing

PRO

- Preferred by some property owners
- Ensures safety of participants by authorizing provider to control the unit
- Provides safety net in the case of loss of job or roommate
- Can reduce the total number of landlords to manage

CON

- Provider has full financial liability
- Youth does not establish credit history

Brooke Svalberg-Wells

- Received a Masters Degree in Social Work from Chico State in 2005
- Social worker at Youth for Change since 2001 serving in programs such as:
 - Wraparound Program
 - Therapeutic Behavioral Services
 - Parent Child Infant Therapy clinician
 - Foster Care to Adoption
 - Transitional Housing
- Current role: Transitional Housing Programs Coordinator
- Director of the Youth For Change Foster Care Services Program December 2010-2014
- Key member of the THP-Plus and THP+FC implementation team for Butte County

Youth for Change

- **First established in 1991 and located in Butte County**
 - Smaller county where it can be easier to build relationships with landlords
 - Lower cost of living than larger urban areas
 - College town with a very impacted rental market
- **Scattered housing model, mostly 1 BR apartments**
- **Rent ceiling of \$650**
- **County-wide youth stipend of \$1,300 a month**
- **Currently serving:**
 - 10 youth through **THP-Plus**
 - 2 youth through Butte County's **THP-Plus Connection**
 - 15 youth in **THP+FC**



Benefits of Co-Leasing

- The youth is able to establish rental history and credit history while also having a safety net
 - Ex. Youth loses job and would otherwise not make rent
- Landlord works with the provider if concerns/issues arise
- The youth gets the hands on experience of signing a lease and paying rent directly to a landlord
- The lease legitimizes the rules of the program
- The youth can choose to stay in the apartment upon exit if landlord agrees to release YFC from lease and/or add another co-leaser obtained by the youth

Supporting the Youth

Sit down with youth and review lease with landlord

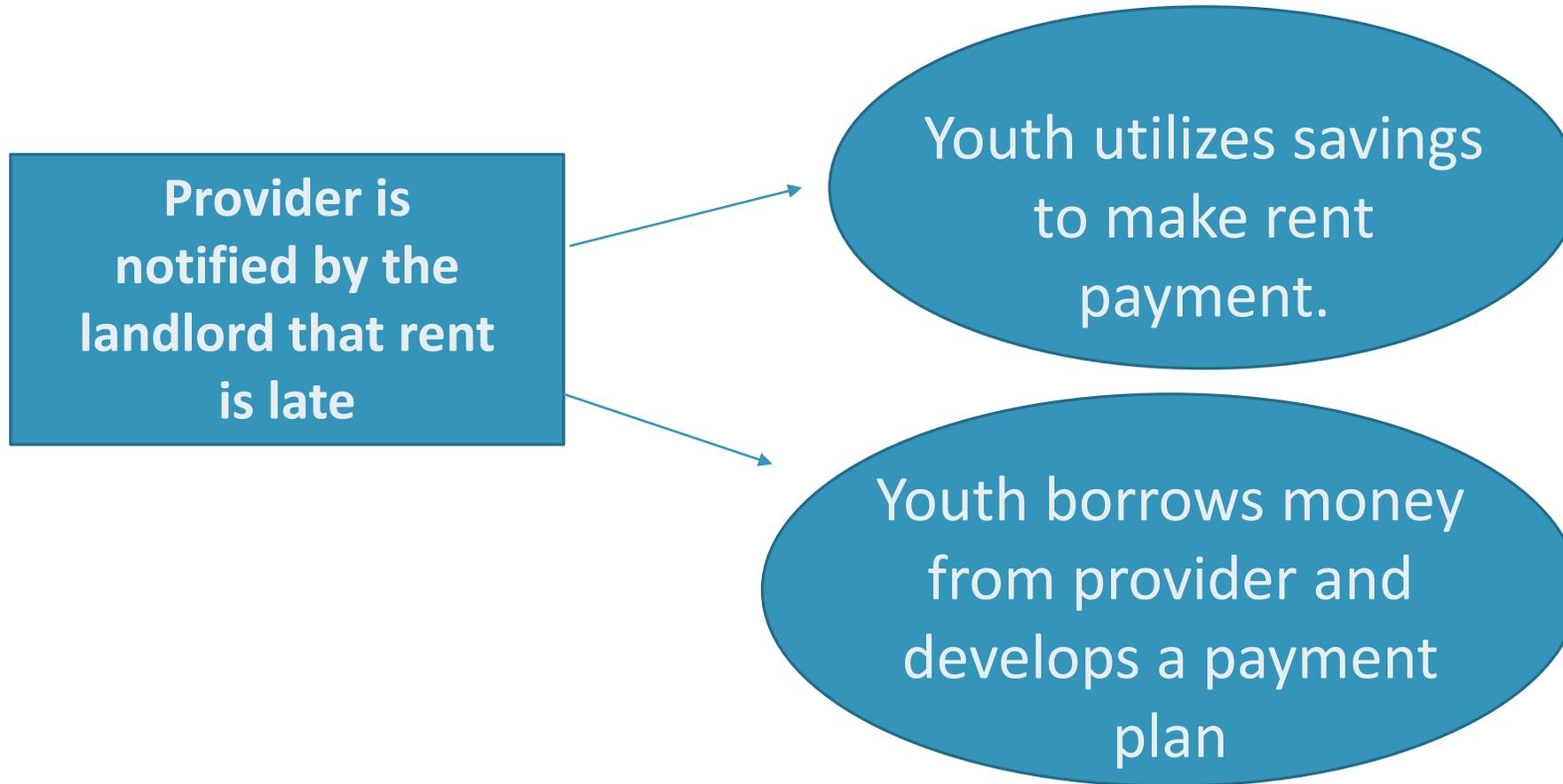


Social worker meets with youth for first rental payment process



Conflict resolution on case by case basis

Handling Non-Payment of Rent



Lessons Learned

- **Foster Independence by Showing & Helping:**
 - Let youth experience apartment searching, signing a lease, paying rent while also making sure they feel very supported
- **Rent ceilings are important:**
 - Ensures that the youth can afford renting that unit after they leave the program
 - Exceptions can be made for youth with a very solid work history
- **Month to month lease:** Situations can change quickly

Property Management

Bonnie Meyer

- East Bay Facilities Manager for Bay Area Youth Centers since 2012
- Has worked with foster youth and their families since 1990
- Licensed Real Estate Agent in California who began working in Property Management and Commercial and Residential Leasing in 2001
- Her current role combines her passion for working with youth in care with her property management knowledge

Bay Area Youth Center (BAYC)

- Founded in 1974, located in Alameda County, a division of Sunny Hills Services since 2008
- Provides an area of services for Transition Age Youth including housing, mental health, case management, and an on-site LGBTQ community center
- A THPP provider since 2003 for 17-18 year olds
- Lease 25 2-BR units
- The first licensed THP+FC provider in CA in 2012
 - Scattered and single site housing models.
 - Licensed to serve up to 99 youth
 - Currently have the capacity to serve 50 youth in THPP and THP+FC in Alameda County



Property Management: The Basics

- Establish a basic furniture and household supply set-up for each apartment.
- Provide certain items to our youth upon move-in

Example: RAFA Apartment Check List

- Conduct an inventory and a walk-through prior to a youth moving in to note any prior damage before the youth moves in.
- Conduct a move-out inspection when youth exits
- Conduct a monthly Health and Safety Check
 - Identify that the smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors are operational.
 - Ensure a CCL Safety items are in place and accessible.
 - Look repairs that need to be made to meet CCL requirements.
- Establish a system for repairs

Establishing a system for repairs:

- Establishing go-to maintenance workers for:
 - Plumbing Issues
 - Locksmith needs
 - General repairs
- Weekly apartment checks to look for property damages
- Monthly health and safety checks
- 24-hour on-call system for youth to report property damage issues



Limiting the involvement of the landlord in general repairs strengthens the working relationship between the landlord and provider.

Communication as a Property Management Strategy:



- **Open lines of communication with the landlord:**
 - Designating a clear point person for property management issues/topics
 - Being timely and responsive to concerns
 - 24 hour on-call system for emergencies
- **Open lines of communication with the youth:**
 - 24 hour on-call system for emergencies
 - Utilizing weekly property checks & monthly health and safety checks as a space for youth to check in about any concerns/issues

Good Tenancy Training:

- Checking in with youth before they move in regarding:
 - Guests Policy and General rules of our program/Property rules from Lease
 - Roommate meetings
 - Community meetings
 - Weekly apartment Checks and Monthly Health and Safety Checks
 - Rental reference when they leave our program in good standing.
- Build a system of accountability and developing good habits:
 - Charge youth for Property damage (if we know they did it).
 - Charge youth for lock out services, for changing locks and replacing keys (if they are responsible for it).
 - Small monetary incentives when youth have good weekly apartment checks as well as no damage.
 - Help with cleaning or other issues running a household.

Conflict Resolution with Landlords

- Understanding the difference between an eviction and a “30-day notice”
- Be responsive to issues and concerns raised by the landlord
- If the conflict cannot be resolved, negotiate for the youth to be moved to a different apartment in order to keep the apartment
 - *More likely to be receptive if you can transfer the youth much sooner than 30 days.*

Questions and Answers

For more information:

To share or revisit this presentation visit thpplus.org and go to “Past Trainings”

To contact today’s presenters, email them at:

Luis Madrid – lmadrid@aspiranet.org

Brooke Svalberg-Wells: bsvalberg@youth4change.org

Bonnie Meyer: bonnie@baycyouth.org

Questions can also be directed to Cecilia Tran at Cecilia@johnburtonfoundation.org