

LOCAL STRATEGIES FOR UTILIZING THP-PLUS FUNDING

Counties can find their THP-Plus Realignment allocation in County Fiscal Letter 11/12-18 on page 25 (http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/lettersnotices/entres/getinfo/cfl/2011-12/11-12_18.pdf). Historical realignment spending by county can be found in the April 2016 Child Welfare Services & Adult Protective Services Realignment Report attachments on page 30 (<http://www.cdss.ca.gov/cdssweb/Pg2400.htm>).

1. INCREASE BED CAPACITY

A county that is not fully utilizing their THP-Plus allocation and whose programs have waiting lists, should first consider increasing their THP-Plus bed capacity to ensure youth in need of housing are being provided this service with the funding intended for this purpose.

2. ENSURE SUFFICIENT OUTREACH IS BEING CONDUCTED

Prior to the extension of foster care to age 21, the majority of THP-Plus participants were 18, 19 and 20 years old. Now that 85 percent of THP-Plus participants are between the ages of 21 and 24, some providers report that it is more challenging to identify these youth, many of whom are not entering THP-Plus directly from foster care, and nearly a third of whom are entering THP-Plus directly from homelessness. In order to reach this more marginal population, providers may have to adjust outreach plans, which may include significantly more information sharing about their programs throughout the community; ensuring they have direct connections to homeless shelters; and in some communities, conducting street outreach.

3. INCREASE RATE

A county may choose to increase their THP-Plus rate in order to ensure that it is keeping pace with increases to the cost of housing. A county may also choose to further increase the rate in order to deepen the level of services provided to youth (e.g. reducing caseloads and providing more intensive case management), or to add additional services (e.g. tutoring). Over FY 2015-16, five programs (20% of programs offering single-site housing) reported that their single-site rate had increased, and ten programs (17% of programs offering scattered-site housing) reported that their scattered-site rate had increased.

4. DEVELOP TIERED RATE STRUCTURE

A county may increase their THP-Plus rate for a subpopulation of youth (i.e. parenting youth, disabled youth, youth with exceptional mental health needs), establishing a tiered rate structure. It costs considerably more to serve youth with higher needs in order to accommodate alternate living arrangements (i.e. single apartments for parenting youth) or address crises that require immediate intervention (i.e. emergency on-call staff to tend to mental health crises, safety concerns, or interruptions in living arrangements). Santa Clara County, for example, utilizes a tiered rate structure for parenting youth, providing \$2,400 per youth per month on behalf of non-parenting youth, and \$2,800 per youth per month on behalf of youth who are custodial parents.

5. SERVE OUT-OF-COUNTY YOUTH

A county may consider serving youth who exited foster care in other jurisdictions. Sometimes youth relocate and do not live in their county of origin (where they exited foster care). Youth may choose to relocate for various reasons, including to attend college, for a job, for safety reasons, or to live in a community where they may have family or social ties. Across the state, at least 34 counties accept out-of-county youth in their THP-Plus programs in some sort of capacity.

6. OPT INTO THE THP-PLUS EXTENSION FOR YOUTH ENROLLED IN SCHOOL

A county that opts into the THP-Plus extension established by Senate Bill 1252 may serve youth who are enrolled in school for up to 36 months as opposed to 24 months, and up to age 25 as opposed to age 24. Currently, 19 counties have opted into the THP-Plus extension.