



# THP-NMD & THP-PLUS ANNUAL REPORT

2019-20

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



**JOHN  
BURTON**  
Advocates for Youth

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**O**n behalf of John Burton Advocates for Youth, we are pleased to share the 2019-20 Annual Report for the Transitional Housing Placement for Non-minor Dependents (THP-NMD) and the Transitional Housing Program-Plus (THP-Plus). This report highlights the achievements and challenges of the programs in helping youth in the foster care and juvenile probation systems make a safe, supported transition to adulthood and provides practice and policy recommendations.

Statewide, 2,032 youth were placed in THP-NMD as of April 1, 2020, a figure that has more than doubled since 2014. The THP-Plus program's statewide moment-in-time housing capacity was 1,271 as of June 30, 2020, and over Fiscal Year (FY) 2019-20 the program served a total of 1,720 youth. Together, these programs are serving more than 3,300 youth on any given day, and more than 4,000 youth over the course of one year.

The second half of the fiscal year was met with considerable hardship for youth participating in THP-NMD and THP-Plus, as they, like the rest of the globe were faced with the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This year's report includes a snapshot of the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on both the education and employment

experiences of youth in the programs. The impact is considerable: **40 percent of youth in THP-NMD and 17 percent in THP-Plus who graduated high school in spring 2020 did not enroll in post-secondary education in the fall due to COVID-19. The majority of youth who were working at the onset of the State of Emergency either lost their jobs or experienced a reduction in hours—79 percent in THP-NMD and 60 percent in THP-Plus.** However, while met with challenges as a result of the crisis, youth in THP-NMD and THP-Plus are—during their time in these programs—stably housed. The value of stable housing during the crisis is unmatched as we watch the state's homeless population scramble to identify viable shelter.

The current public health crisis and subsequent economic recession has deepened disparities between rich and poor, and between those with family support and those without. Now, more than ever, California has an important opportunity to be the “parent” for youth who have been removed from their homes due to maltreatment. This parental duty does not end at 18, or even 21. Right now, young adults need family and support in order to redeem themselves from the hardship they have experienced as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. The report includes a number of findings



that suggest there are areas where it is critical California builds and strengthens its practice and policy. These include:



✓ **Both the THP-NMD and THP-Plus programs are inaccessible to many youth:**

The number of youth waiting for THP-NMD has more than doubled since 2018 when this data was first collected, with 482 youth waiting for the program as of June 30, 2020. In THP-Plus there were a total of 539 youth on waiting lists.

✓ **The growth in the cost of housing in some counties has quickly outpaced the growth of the average THP-Plus rate:**

The average THP-Plus rate has not kept pace with the rising cost of housing and has no mandatory cost of living increase attached to it. The scattered site model, which accounts for 72 percent of the state's THP-Plus housing capacity has grown just 11 percent since FY 2012-13.

✓ **While the vast majority of youth had completed high school by time of exit from either program, they generally did not make progress in post-secondary education, particularly youth in THP-NMD:**

At entrance to THP-NMD, just four percent of participants had the educational status of "dropped out/withdrew from college." By exit from THP-Plus, this percentage increased five-fold to 20 percent, indicating that many youth are enrolling in college and subsequently withdrawing.

✓ **The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the employment progress usually made by participants and their incomes remain low:**

On June 30, 2019, 50 percent of youth

in THP-NMD and 69 percent of youth in THP-Plus were employed. One year later, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, these figures have dropped to 41 percent and 53 percent, respectively.

✓ **Many youth continue to become parents while in THP-NMD and THP-Plus programs:**

The proportion of custodial mothers more than doubled from entrance to exit in THP-NMD (10% to 21%), and increased from 29 to 36 percent in THP-Plus. A total of 657 children were residing with a parent participating in one of these programs as of June 30, 2020.

✓ **Homelessness remains a significant problem for youth entering both programs:**

Nearly one in four (23%) youth experienced homelessness while in foster care prior to entering THP-NMD, and one in three (33%) youth experienced homelessness between leaving foster care and entering THP-Plus.

We invite you to read about the findings described above, discuss them with your community and identify ways that you can address these and other issues identified in the report.

# REPORT METHODOLOGY

Information for the 2019-20 THP-NMD and THP-Plus Annual Report was drawn from a number of different sources. John Burton Advocates for Youth conducted a survey of all nonprofit organizations or county agencies that operated a state licensed THP-NMD and/or county approved THP-Plus program during FY 2019-20. There was a 93 percent response rate among THP-NMD providers and a 97 percent response rate among THP-Plus providers. Additional information was solicited from select county child welfare agencies to ensure complete data was provided in terms of numbers of youth served.

Data was also drawn from the Participant Tracking Systems for each of the two programs, which are online databases administered by John Burton Advocates for Youth that collect demographic and outcome data about youth participating in the programs, entered on a quarterly basis and at the time of program entry and exit by nonprofit providers that elect to use the voluntary system. The information included in the report was provided by analyzing data from three different cohorts of youth participants. First, reports were run that included youth who exited a THP-NMD program and youth who exited a THP-Plus program during FY 2019-20. These reports included 848 THP-NMD participants and 475 THP-Plus participants. Second, reports were run that included all youth who entered a THP-NMD program and all youth who entered a THP-



Plus program during FY 2019-20. These reports included 867 THP-NMD participants and 501 THP-Plus participants. Third, reports were run that included all youth who were active in the program during the last day of the fourth fiscal quarter, June 30, 2020. These reports included 1,026 THP-NMD participants and 686 THP-Plus participants. Data on 51 percent of THP-NMD participants and 68 percent of THP-Plus participants statewide are captured in the respective Participant Tracking Systems.

Additional information about THP-NMD placements was drawn from the California Child Welfare Indicators Project, which provides customizable information on California's entire child welfare system.<sup>1</sup> Finally, individual interviews were conducted with the young adults participating in THP-Plus whose stories were featured in the report.

<sup>1</sup> California Child Welfare Indicators Project. [http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb\\_childwelfare/](http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare/)

# FINDINGS: DEMOGRAPHICS AND NUMBER OF YOUTH SERVED

## Transitional Housing Placement for Non-Minor Dependents (THP-NMD)

The Transitional Housing Placement for Non-minor Dependents (THP-NMD), formerly called “THP-Plus Foster Care” is in its eighth year of implementation.<sup>2</sup> It is a placement option modeled after the THP-Plus program, created in 2010 by the California Fostering Connections to Success Act (Assembly Bill 12) and first implemented in 2012.<sup>3</sup> THP-NMD provides housing and supportive services to Non-Minor Dependents (NMDs) ages 18 up to 21 and is a Title IV-E-reimbursable foster care placement where youth are provided court oversight and child welfare supervision. Following is an overview of the number of youth served by THP-NMD and the demographic profile of youth placed in THP-NMD as of April 1, 2020.

### Growth continues in THP-NMD, but at a slower rate.

As shown in Figures 1 and 2, as of April 1, 2020, a total of 2,032 NMDs were placed in THP-NMD across 49 different counties. A total of 58 out of 71 licensed organizations were operating a THP-NMD program. This is fairly consistent with FY 2018-19 when 1,974 NMDs were placed in THP-NMD across 50 counties, operated by 59 licensed organizations. The number of NMDs placed in THP-NMD has far more than doubled since 2014 when the phase-in of extended foster care was complete and has increased by 21 percent since 2017.



Figure 1: THP-NMD at a Glance<sup>4</sup>

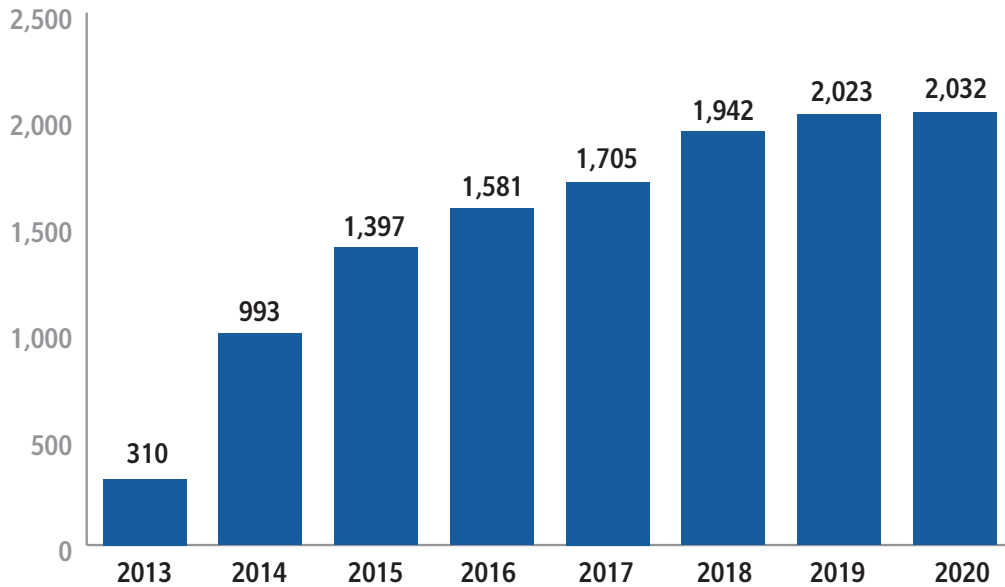
	2018-19	2019-20
Number of NMDs Placed in THP-NMD as of April 1st	1,974	2,032
Number of Licensed THP-NMD Providers; operational	59	58
Number of Licensed THP-NMD Providers; non-operational	13	11
Number of Counties with THP-NMD Housing Located within the County	50	49

2 Senate Bill 612 (Mitchell) was signed into law October 12, 2017, took effect January 1, 2018, and among other provisions, changed the placement name to Transitional Housing Placement for Non-Minor Dependents.

3 Assembly Bill 12 (Beall, Bass) was signed into law September 30, 2010, extending foster care to age 21 through phased-in implementation beginning January 1, 2012.

4 This data was retrieved from three sources: The California Child Welfare Indicators Project (<http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb-childwelfare/>); the California Department of Social Services’ THP-NMD rates list (<https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/foster-care/foster-care-audits-and-rates>); and an online survey administered by John Burton Advocates for Youth to all THP-NMD providers in July 2020.

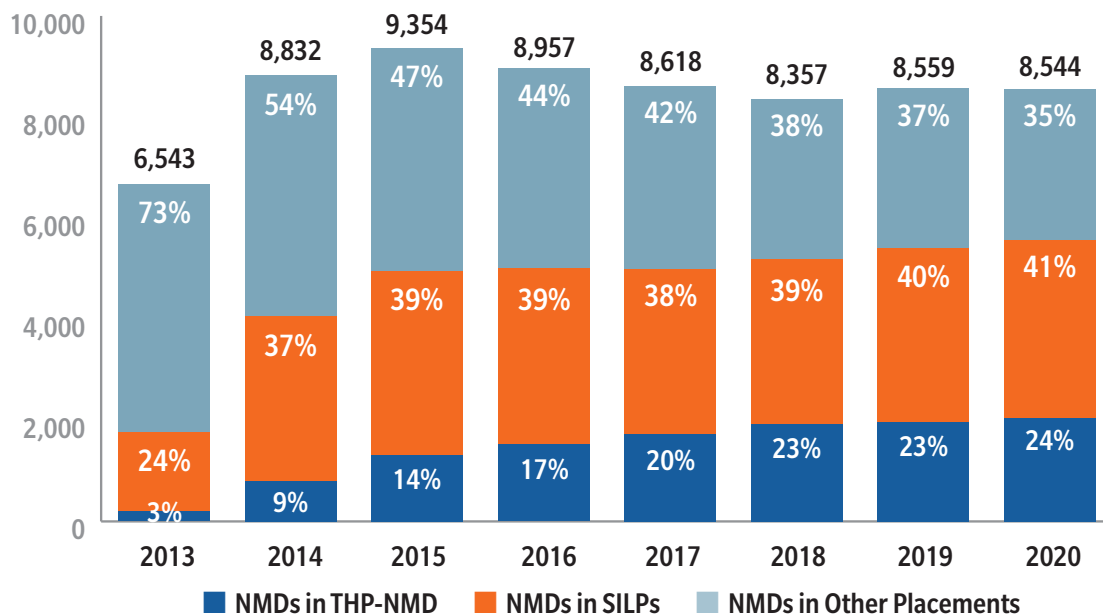
**Figure 2: Number of Non-Minor Dependents Placed in THP-NMD as of April 1st<sup>5</sup>**



Over time, THP-NMD has grown as a more commonly utilized placement for youth, with nearly one in four non-minor dependents placed in THP-NMD as of April 1, 2020.

As illustrated in Figure 3, nearly one in four (24%) NMDs were placed in THP-NMD as of April 1, 2020. THP-NMD continues to grow as a more commonly utilized placement for youth in extended foster care, with the proportion of youth placed in THP-NMD having increased from nine percent in 2014 when extended foster care was fully implemented, and from 20 percent in 2017.

**Figure 3: Proportion of Non-Minor Dependents Placed in THP-NMD, SILPs and Other Placements as of April 1st<sup>6</sup>**



5 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.

6 Ibid.



**The proportion of Latino youth in THP-NMD has increased 20 percent since 2013, and the proportion of White youth has decreased by 31 percent.**

As of April 1, 2020, more than four in ten (42%) NMDs placed in THP-NMD were Latino, a figure that has increased from 35 percent in 2013 (a 20% increase). During that same time period, there has been a 31 percent decrease in the number of White participants (29% to 20%). The proportion of participants who are Black, Asian American and Native American remains the same, at 35 percent, two percent and one percent, respectively. Youth who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer (LGBTQ) make up 13 percent of NMDs in the placement, consistent with the last four years when this data was collected. Also, consistent with previous years, THP-NMD participants are more likely to be female (57%) than male (43%), and 15 percent are supervised by the juvenile probation system. (Figure 4)



**Figure 4: THP-NMD Participant Characteristics as of April 1st<sup>7</sup>**

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Male</b>	40%	39%	42%	42%	43%	43%	44%	43%
<b>Female</b>	60%	61%	58%	58%	57%	57%	56%	57%
<b>Other</b>				0%	1%	1%	0%	0%
<b>LGBTQ</b>				12%	12%	14%	14%	13%
<b>Black</b>	32%	38%	38%	36%	35%	36%	35%	35%
<b>White</b>	29%	26%	24%	24%	25%	22%	20%	20%
<b>Latino</b>	35%	33%	34%	36%	37%	39%	41%	42%
<b>Asian/Pacific Islander</b>	3%	2%	3%	3%	2%	2%	3%	2%
<b>Native American</b>	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
<b>Supervised by Juvenile Probation</b>	3%	14%	17%	18%	18%	17%	15%	15%

<sup>7</sup> 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.

## Transitional Housing Program-Plus (THP-Plus)

The Transitional Housing Program Plus (THP-Plus) was created by the California State Legislature in 2001 in response to the alarming rate of homelessness among former foster youth. The program provides safe, affordable housing and supportive services to former foster and out-of-home probation youth, ages 18 to 24 for up to 24 months. In counties that have opted into the THP-Plus extension established by Senate Bill 1252, youth enrolled in school can access THP-Plus for up to 36 months and up to age 25. Following is an overview of the number of youth served by THP-Plus and the demographic profile of youth participating in THP-Plus during FY 2019-20. The current report counts the number of youth participating in THP-Plus in three ways. These include:

- ✓ **The number of youth in the program as of June 30, 2020:** This is the number of youth who were participating in THP-Plus as of June 30, 2020. This is referred to as the “moment-in-time” count.
- ✓ **The number of youth served over 12 months:** This is the total number of youth who participated in THP-Plus at some point between July 1, 2019 and June 30, 2020.
- ✓ **The number of contracted beds:** This is the total “capacity” of the program; it is the total number of beds that THP-Plus providers collectively contract with county child welfare agencies to provide, or that child welfare agencies provide directly, at a moment-in-time.

**Nine percent fewer youth were participating in THP-Plus on June 30, 2020 as compared to June 30, 2019.**

As shown in Figure 5, as of June 30, 2020, a total of 1,083 youth were participating in the THP-Plus program, 110 or nine percent less than the number of youth in the program as of June 30, 2019. THP-Plus providers report that this decrease is due to the temporary extension of the extended foster care program, a statewide response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The FY 2020-21 state budget included \$32 million to allow youth who turned 21 on or after April 17, 2020, to remain in foster care until June 30, 2021. The cohort of 21-year-olds that would have normally exited care during the fourth quarter of the fiscal year instead remained in care. Therefore, none of these 21-year-olds accessed the THP-Plus program resulting in a smaller number of youth being in the THP-Plus program on June 30, 2020.

**While slightly lower, the number of youth participating served over 12 months and the overall capacity of the program remain consistent with the previous year.**

The statewide moment-in-time housing capacity and the total number of youth served remained relatively consistent with the previous fiscal year, with only a slight increase in capacity (from 1,252 to 1,271) and a slight decrease in the total number served (from 1,739 to 1,720).

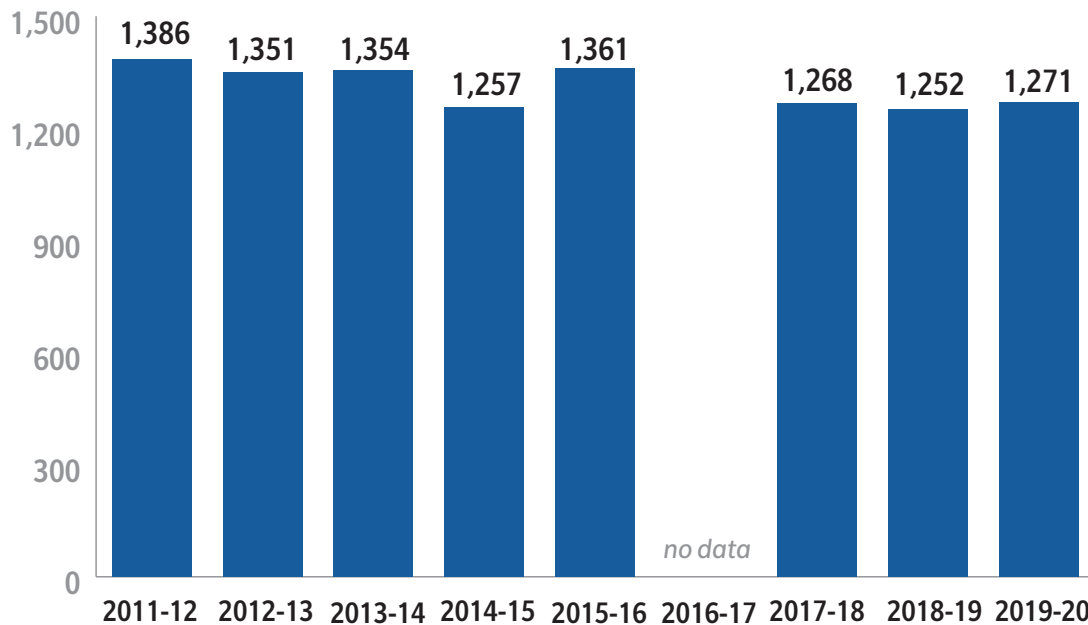
As shown in Figure 5, there were three less THP-Plus programs in the state during FY 2019-20 than in the year prior, and three less organizations operating programs. These three programs’ contracts were not renewed by their counties, however the THP-Plus slots they previously operated were absorbed by other existing programs, therefore maintaining their counties’ THP-Plus housing capacity.

**Figure 5: THP-Plus at a Glance<sup>8</sup>**

	2018-19	2019-20
Number of Youth Served in THP-Plus over 12 months	1,739	1,720
Number of contracted THP-Plus beds	1,252	1,271
Number of Youth in THP-Plus as of June 30th	1,196	1,086
Number of Organizations Providing THP-Plus	55	52
Number of THP-Plus Programs	76	73
Number of Counties with THP-Plus Programs	47	47

Despite THP-Plus being realigned from the state to the counties in 2011, the program remains strong with just an eight percent decrease since 2011. As shown in Figure 6, since FY 2011-12 when the THP-Plus program was realigned from the state to the counties, the statewide housing capacity has decreased by eight percent, from 1,386 housing slots in FY 2011-12 to 1,271 housing slots in FY 2019-20.

**Figure 6: Number of Contracted THP-Plus Slots Over Fiscal Year (Statewide Housing Capacity)**



<sup>8</sup> Data was retrieved from an online survey administered by John Burton Advocates for Youth to all THP-Plus providers in July 2020



**More than half (57%) of the counties in California with THP-Plus programs provide the third-year THP-Plus extension as of June 30, 2020.**

As of June 30, 2020, twenty-seven counties were providing the third-year THP-Plus extension made available by Senate Bill 1252 (Torres).<sup>9</sup> Youth in THP-Plus programs in counties that have opted into the extension can remain in the program for an additional 12 months and up to age 25 if they are enrolled in school. As of June 30, 2020 these 27 counties accounted for 70 percent of the statewide THP-Plus housing capacity. The number of counties implementing the extension increased by one county between FY 2018-19 and FY 2019-20, with Orange County opting in as of July 1, 2020.

**The proportion of THP-Plus participants who report identifying as LGBTQ has increased 43 percent since FY 2012-13.**

The proportion of youth participating in THP-Plus who report identifying as LGBTQ has increased 43 percent, from eight percent in FY 2012-13 to 14 percent in FY 2019-20. Like THP-NMD, THP-Plus participants are more likely to be female (59%) than male (39%). Participation among youth previously supervised by the juvenile probation system has decreased from 15 percent in FY 2012-13 to nine percent in FY 2019-20, although remains relatively consistent with the previous fiscal year (7%). The proportion of THP-Plus participants who identify as multi-racial or other has increased from 34 percent in FY 2012-13 to 41 percent in FY 2019-20, and who identify as Hispanic has increased from 38 percent to 44 percent.

Just two percent of youth who entered a THP-Plus program during FY 2019-20 were between the ages of 18 and 20, while 98 percent were between the ages of 21 and 24. This decrease in the younger subset of youth follows a consistent trend since extended foster care implementation began in 2012. (Figure 7)

<sup>9</sup> Senate Bill 1252 (Torres), Chapter 774 (2014). Counties that had opted into the THP-Plus extension as of FY 2019-20 are: Imperial, Kings, Los Angeles, Mariposa, Mendocino, Merced, Napa, Nevada, Orange, Placer, Plumas, Riverside, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Francisco, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, San Mateo, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Solano, Tulare, Ventura, Yolo and Yuba.

**Figure 7: THP-Plus Participant Characteristics at Entrance to the Program<sup>10</sup>**

	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
<b>Male</b>	42%	44%	44%	40%	44%	36%	39%	39%
<b>Female</b>	58%	56%	56%	60%	56%	64%	60%	60%
<b>Other</b>							1%	1%
<b>Age 18-20</b>	52%	35%	18%	15%	13%	7%	2%	2%
<b>Age 21-24</b>	48%	65%	82%	85%	87%	93%	98%	98%
<b>LGBTQ</b>	8%	9%	11%	9%	10%	9%	12%	14%
<b>Black</b>	34%	32%	38%	33%	32%	33%	35%	29%
<b>White</b>	27%	24%	28%	28%	22%	27%	25%	26%
<b>American Indian or Alaskan Native</b>	3%	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%
<b>Asian, Pacific Islander or Native Hawaiian</b>	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%
<b>Multi-Racial or Other</b>	34%	41%	32%	36%	43%	37%	37%	41%
<b>Hispanic Ethnicity</b>	38%	42%	40%	42%	46%	45%	42%	44%
<b>Formerly Juvenile Probation-Supervised</b>	15%	11%	11%	9%	6%	6%	7%	9%

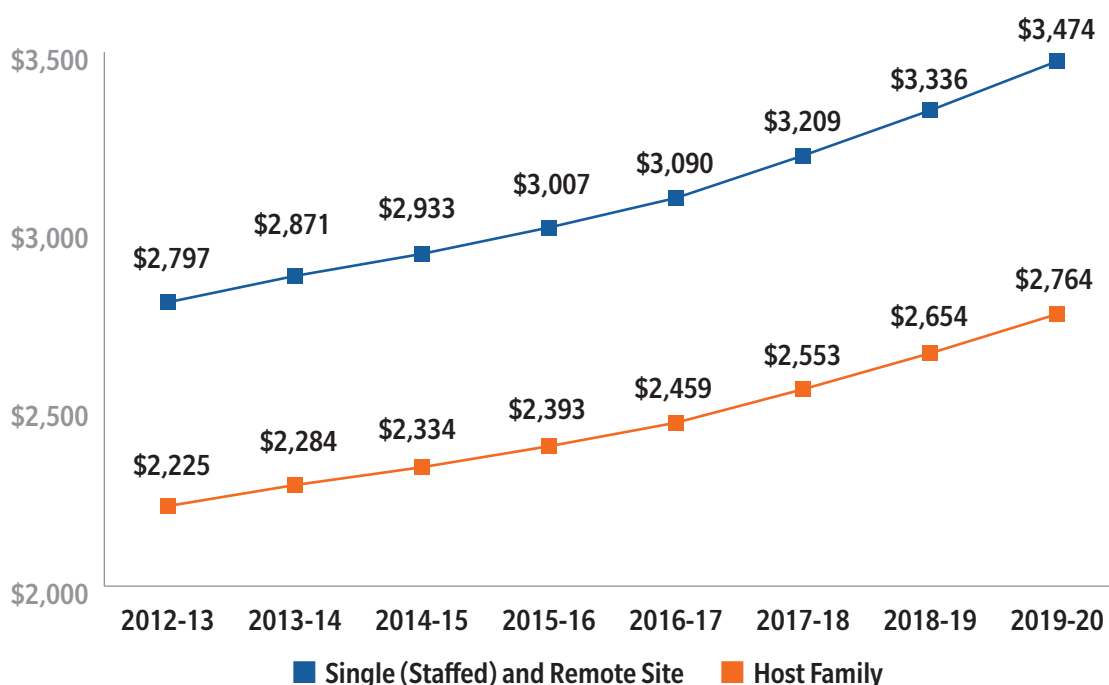
<sup>10</sup> Data was retrieved from the THP-Plus Participant Tracking System by running a report for youth who entered THP-Plus during FY 2019-20.

# FINDINGS: THP-NMD AND THP-PLUS RATES

The statewide THP-NMD rate increased by four percent, as required by statute.

Effective July 1, 2019, the rate for THP-NMD was \$3,474 for the single and remote site models and \$2,764 for the host family model, as shown in Figure 8. This is a four percent increase from the FY 2018-19 rates of \$3,336 for the single and remote sites and \$2,654 for the host family model. Being a statewide foster care rate, the THP-NMD rate receives an annual cost-of-living increase based on the California Necessities Index (CNI). One county, Orange, supplements the single site rate paid to THP-NMD providers with \$531, bringing their rate to \$4,005, in order to account for the higher costs associated with operating a staffed site, which is a required feature of the THP-NMD single site housing model.

Figure 8: Statewide THP-NMD Rate per Youth Per Month<sup>11</sup>



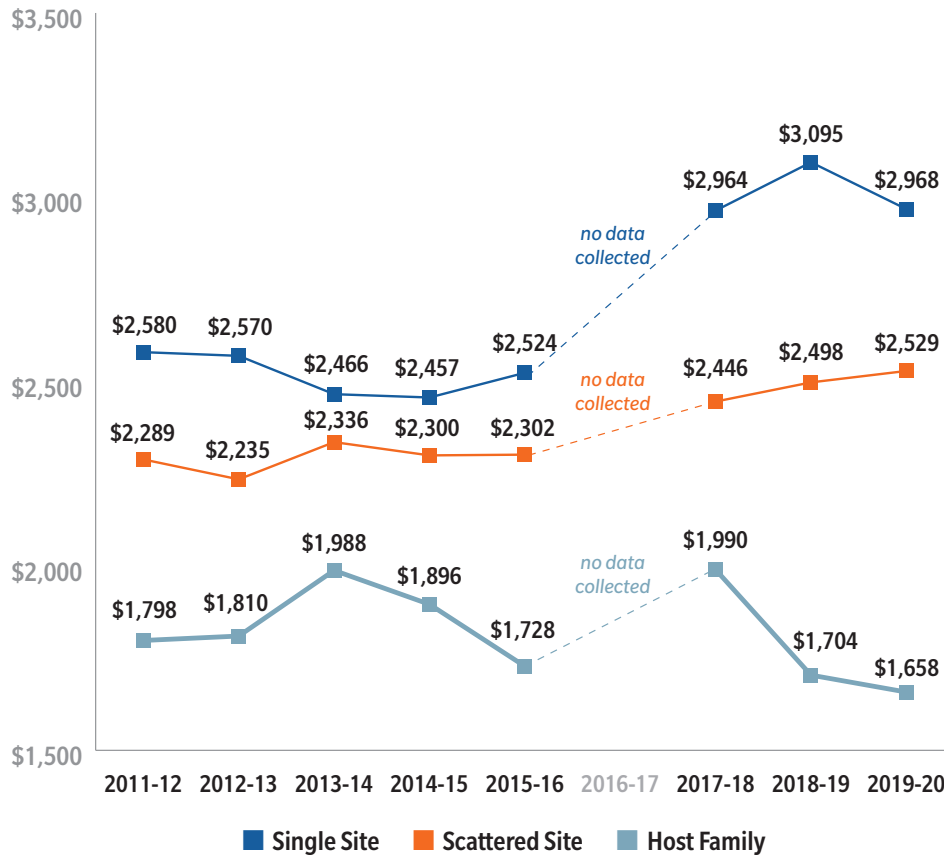
The average monthly rate paid per youth by counties to THP-Plus providers for the scattered site housing model has increased just slightly from the previous fiscal year, while the average rate for the single site and host family models have decreased.

Figure 9 shows the average THP-Plus rate that counties pay providers per youth per month to operate a THP-Plus program, or in the case of the five counties that operate their programs directly, the monthly cost per youth per month. The average rate for the most common housing model—scattered site, has experienced only a slight increase for the last two years (a \$52 increase in FY 2018-19 and a \$31 increase in FY 2019-20).

<sup>11</sup> Data was retrieved from the California Department of Social Services' All County Letters on California Necessities Index Increases for each fiscal year (<https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/Letters-Regulations/Letters-and-Notices/All-County-Letters>)

The average rate for both the single site and host family housing models have decreased slightly from the previous year. The decreases in the average rate for the single site and host family models are not due to individual rate decreases among counties, but instead to an increase in housing capacity in counties with comparatively lower single site and host family rates.

**Figure 9: THP-Plus Average Rates Per Youth Per Month<sup>12</sup>**



**THP-Plus rates continue to vary considerably across the state.**

There continues to be variability in the rates paid across counties. Single site rates range from a high of \$4,005 in Orange County to \$1,767 in Yuba County. Scattered site rates range from \$4,131 in Marin County to \$1,538 in Kern County. Host family rates range from \$3,146 in San Mateo County to \$500 in Ventura County. Two counties offer a higher rate for custodial parents. For FY 2019-20, Santa Clara County’s standard monthly rate per youth was \$2,400 and provided a parenting rate of \$2,800. San Mateo’s monthly rate was \$3,146 and provided a parenting rate of \$3,626. For a list of THP-Plus rates by county, see Appendix A.

**Since FY 2012-13, the THP-NMD rate has grown twice as fast as the average THP-Plus rate.**

Since FY 2012-13, the THP-NMD rate for the remote site model has grown 24 percent, based on annual CNI increases applied to foster care rates. The average THP-Plus rate for the scattered site model has grown 11 percent. Unlike THP-NMD rates, THP-Plus rates are set at the county level and are not required to be adjusted annually to account for increases in cost of living. From year to year, survey respondents have consistently stressed the concern that the cost of housing has outpaced the growth in the rate for both programs.

<sup>12</sup> Data was retrieved from an online survey administered by John Burton Advocates for Youth to all THP-Plus providers annually in July.

# FINDINGS: HOUSING ENTRANCE AND EXIT

**The number of youth waiting for THP-NMD has more than doubled since 2018, with 482 youth waiting for the program as of June 30, 2020.**

As shown in Figure 10, THP-NMD providers reported that a total of 482 youth were on waiting lists for their program as of June 30, 2020. This is a figure that has more than doubled since 2018 when this data was first collected, and that has increased by 41 percent since 2019. Los Angeles, Alameda and San Bernardino Counties had the longest waiting lists for THP-NMD. Exact information about the status of these youth is unknown. It is estimated, based on demographic data of youth entering THP-NMD, that at least one in ten are experiencing homelessness.

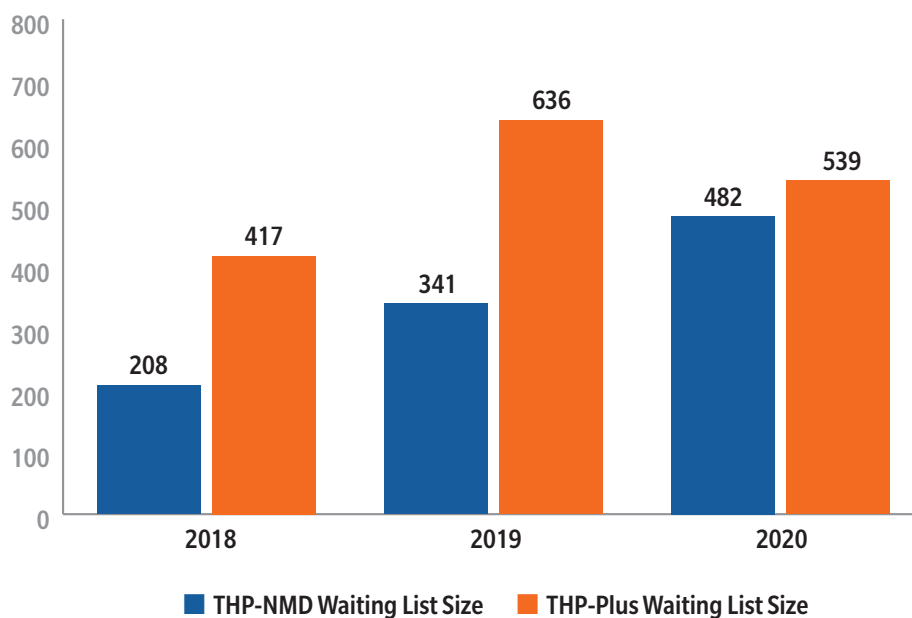
**The number of youth waiting for THP-Plus has decreased by 15 percent since the year prior, with 539 youth on waiting lists as of June 30, 2020.**

Also shown in Figure 10, THP-Plus providers

reported that a total of 539 youth were on waiting lists for their program as of June 30, 2020. Like the decrease in youth participating in the program as of June 30, 2020, this 15 percent decrease in youth on waiting lists is attributable to the temporary extension of the extended foster care program, a statewide response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The FY 2020-21 state budget provided \$32 million to allow youth who turned 21 on or after April 17, 2020, to remain in foster care until June 30, 2021. The cohort of 21-year-olds that would have normally exited care during the fourth quarter of the fiscal year instead remained in care. Therefore, there was a decrease in youth leaving care and attempting to access the THP-Plus program. Kern, Los Angeles and Contra Costa Counties had the longest waiting lists for THP-Plus. It is estimated, based on demographic data of youth entering THP-Plus, that at least 16 percent of youth on waiting lists are experiencing homelessness.

*For a list of waiting list numbers for both programs by county, see Appendix B.*

**Figure 10: Number of Youth on Waiting Lists for THP-NMD and THP-Plus as of June 30th<sup>13</sup>**



<sup>13</sup> Data was retrieved from an online survey administered by John Burton Advocates for Youth to all THP-NMD and THP-Plus providers annually in July.



**There is great variation in whether and how THP-NMD and THP-Plus waiting lists are maintained.**

There is no statewide requirement regarding utilization or management of waiting lists for THP-NMD or THP-Plus. This results in great variation in whether and how waiting lists are maintained. For THP-NMD, in two counties, no providers maintain a waiting list if and when their program becomes full. For THP-Plus, in seven counties no providers are in the practice of maintaining a waiting list. In the other counties, some providers maintain waiting lists, and some do not. Providers also report that in some counties, it is the county agency that maintains the list; in others, maintaining a waiting list is prohibited. For those that do maintain waiting lists, management practices vary, including the length of time a youth can remain on the list and the frequency at which youth are contacted about their current housing status and continued need or interest in the program.

**In addition to demand among eligible youth, there is also demand for THP-Plus among youth who exited foster care prior to turning 18 years old.**

THP-Plus providers report that former foster youth in need of housing continue to attempt to access their THP-Plus programs but are not eligible under current THP-Plus eligibility criteria. Current eligibility criteria for THP-Plus requires youth to have been in foster care on their 18th birthday. Of the state’s 73 THP-Plus programs, 37 (51%) reported they had collectively denied approximately 170 youth admission to the program because they exited foster care to reunification, guardianship or adoption before turning 18. Of those youth, approximately 111 of



them exited care after turning 16, meaning they were just one to two years shy of meeting THP-Plus eligibility requirements.<sup>14</sup> Because many providers do not gather this level of information about youth they do not serve in their program, this is an underreporting.

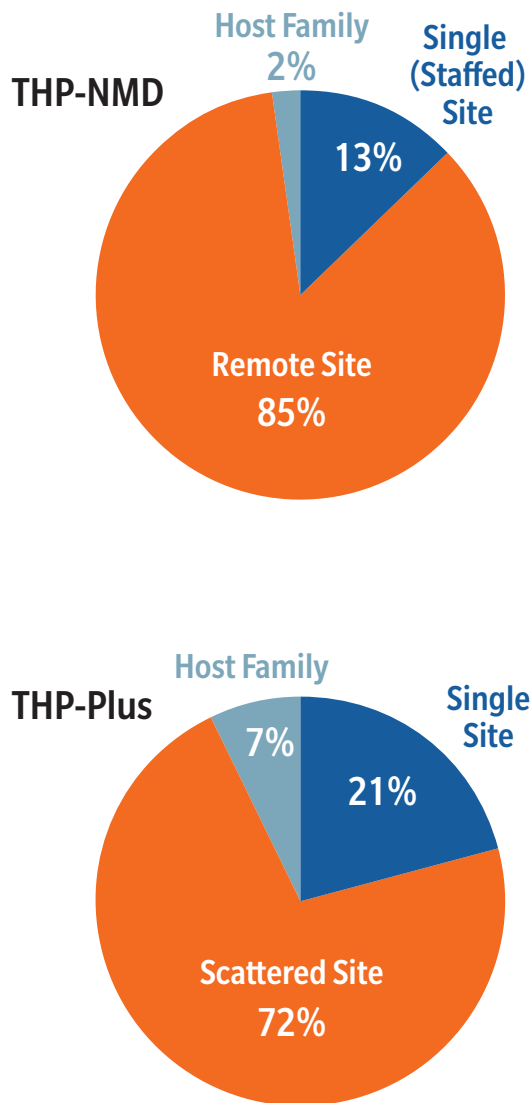
**The remote/scattered site model is the most prevalent housing model in both THP-NMD and THP-Plus.**

As illustrated in Figure 11, of youth who entered the program during FY 2019-20, the housing model known as remote site in THP-NMD and scattered site in THP-Plus accounted for the vast majority of the housing capacity statewide (85% in THP-NMD and 72% in THP-Plus). The second-most common housing model was the single site model, which in THP-NMD is a staffed model, accounting for 13 percent of THP-NMD housing slots and 21 percent of THP-Plus housing slots. The host family model accounts for just two percent of THP-NMD and seven percent of THP-Plus housing slots, statewide.<sup>15</sup>

14 Data was retrieved from an online survey administered by John Burton Advocates for Youth to all THP-Plus providers in July 2020.

15 The THP-Plus and THP-NMD programs consist of three types of housing models with only slight differences between the two programs. The “single site model” refers to one apartment building or complex, owned or leased by the THP-Plus or THP-NMD provider, where all of the program participants live. In the THP-NMD program, the single site requires on-site staffing; in THP-Plus it does not. The “scattered site model” in THP-Plus, referred to as the “remote site model” in THP-NMD, refers to leasing apartments in various locations throughout the community, often in small clusters. Finally, the “host family model” refers to an arrangement where caring, supportive adult(s) host the youth in their home, providing room and board.

Figure 11: Capacity by Housing Model<sup>16</sup>



In THP-NMD, youth were most likely to enter the program directly from a family-based foster care setting or congregate care; in THP-Plus youth were most likely to enter from renting their own or shared housing.

Figure 12 shows the living settings where youth were residing just prior to entering THP-NMD and THP-Plus, and the living settings where they moved once they exited the program. The majority of youth in THP-NMD entered the program directly from another foster care setting (66%) with nearly one-quarter entering from a Resource Family (24%) and a similar proportion from a Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Program (STRTP) or Group Home (23%). In THP-Plus, the majority of youth entered the program from renting their own or shared housing where they were paying rent (32%).

**In THP-NMD, youth were most likely to exit to a living setting where they are not paying rent. In THP-Plus, youth were most likely to exit to a living setting where they are paying rent.**

Of youth who exited a THP-NMD program during FY 2019-20, the single-most common living setting they transitioned to was living with a relative or other person in stable housing, not paying rent (26%). In THP-Plus, over half (52%) of the youth exited to a living setting where they were renting their own or shared housing, paying rent. (Figure 12)

**More youth entered THP-Plus from unstable housing or homelessness than THP-NMD.**

As shown in Figure 12, nine percent of youth in THP-NMD and 15 percent of youth in THP-Plus entered the program directly from an emergency shelter, homelessness, or other unstable housing (street, car, couch-surfing, etc.) At exit, six percent of youth across both programs exited to emergency shelter, homelessness, or other unstable housing.

16 Data on THP-NMD capacity by housing model was retrieved from the THP-Plus Participant Tracking System by running an entrance report for youth who entered THP-Plus during FY 2019-20. Data on THP-Plus capacity by housing model was retrieved from an online survey administered by John Burton Advocates for Youth to all THP-Plus providers in July 2020. The figures reported on are the percentages of the statewide housing capacity that each housing model accounts for.

**Figure 12: Living Settings of Youth Who Exited THP-NMD and THP-Plus During FY 2019-20<sup>17</sup>**

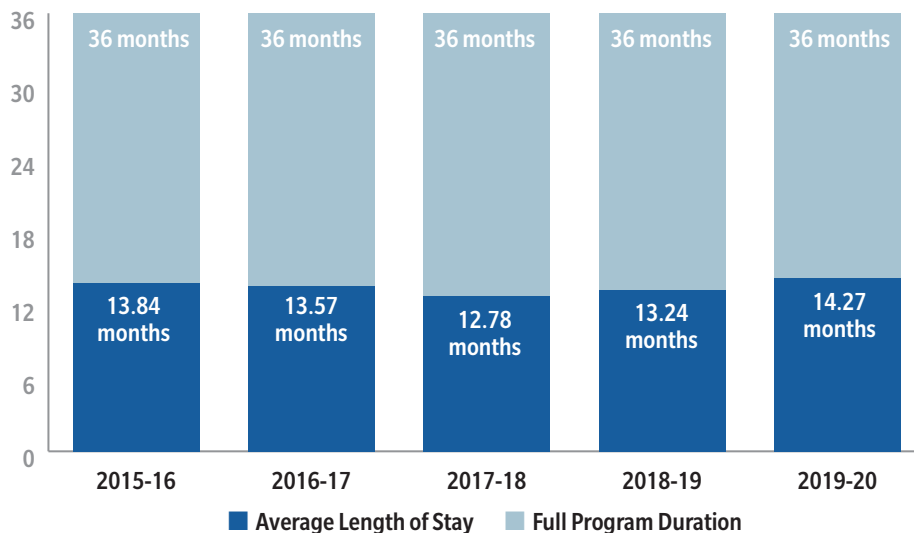
HOUSING TYPE	THP-NMD		THP-Plus	
	Youth Entered from this Living Setting	Youth Exited to this Living Setting	Youth Entered from this Living Setting	Youth Exited to this Living Setting
A THP-Plus Program	1%	14%	4%	2%
A THP-NMD Program	7%	8%	14%	1%
Supervised Independent Living Placement	9%	11%	0%	0%
Resource Family	24%	1%	1%	0%
Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Program (STRTP)/Group Home	23%	0%	0%	0%
THP for Minors	3%	0%	3%	N/A
Other supportive transitional housing program	1%	5%	6%	5%
Renting own / shared housing (paying rent)	4%	21%	32%	52%
Living with relative / other person in stable housing (free rent)	15%	26%	18%	24%
Emergency shelter, homeless, or other unstable housing (street, car, couch-surfing, etc.)	9%	6%	15%	6%
Incarcerated	1%	3%	1%	2%
College dorm	0%	0%	1%	1%
Other	3%	4%	5%	7%

<sup>17</sup> Data was retrieved from the THP-NMD and THP-Plus Participant Tracking Systems by running reports for youth who exited THP-NMD or THP-Plus during FY 2019-20.

The average length of stay has increased in THP-NMD and THP-Plus but remains well below the maximum program duration. Figures 13 and 14 show the average length of stay for youth in the THP-NMD and THP-Plus programs, compared to the full amount of time youth may access the programs. Of youth who exited a THP-NMD program during FY 2019-20, the average length of stay was 14.27 months. For THP-Plus, the average length of stay was 16.70 months. In THP-NMD, youth can access the program for the duration of their stay in extended foster care—36 months. In THP-Plus, youth can access the program for up to 24 months, or in counties that offer the SB 1252 extension, for up to 36 months if the youth is enrolled in school. The average length of stay for youth who exited THP-NMD has remained relatively consistent over the last four years, increasing just three percent. In THP-Plus there has been a 31 percent increase, up four months since FY 2015-16.

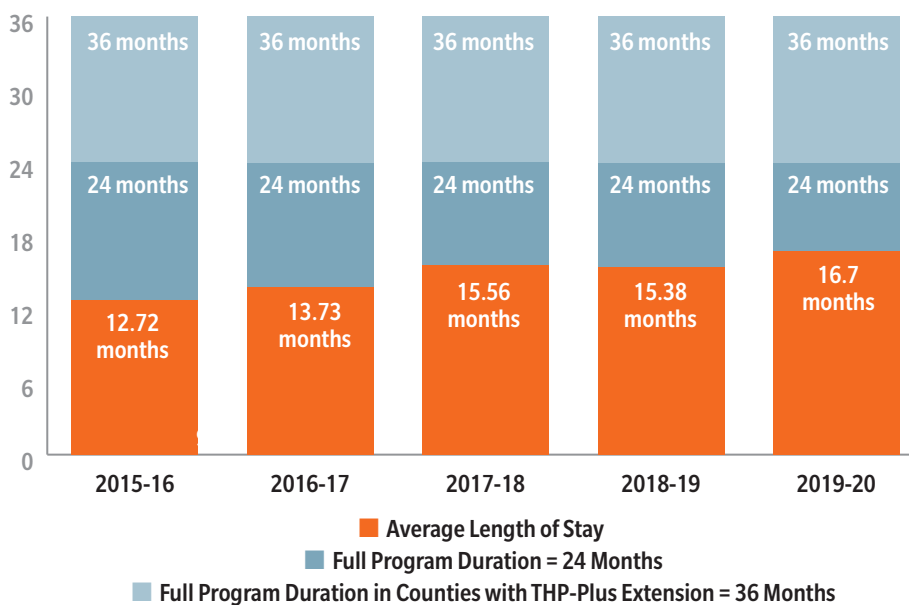
**Figure 13: Average Length of Stay vs. Full Program Duration for Youth in THP-NMD<sup>18</sup>**

Youth Who Exited THP-NMD During the Fiscal Year



**Figure 14: Average Length of Stay vs. Full Program Duration for Youth in THP-Plus<sup>19</sup>**

Youth Who Exited THP-Plus During the Fiscal Year



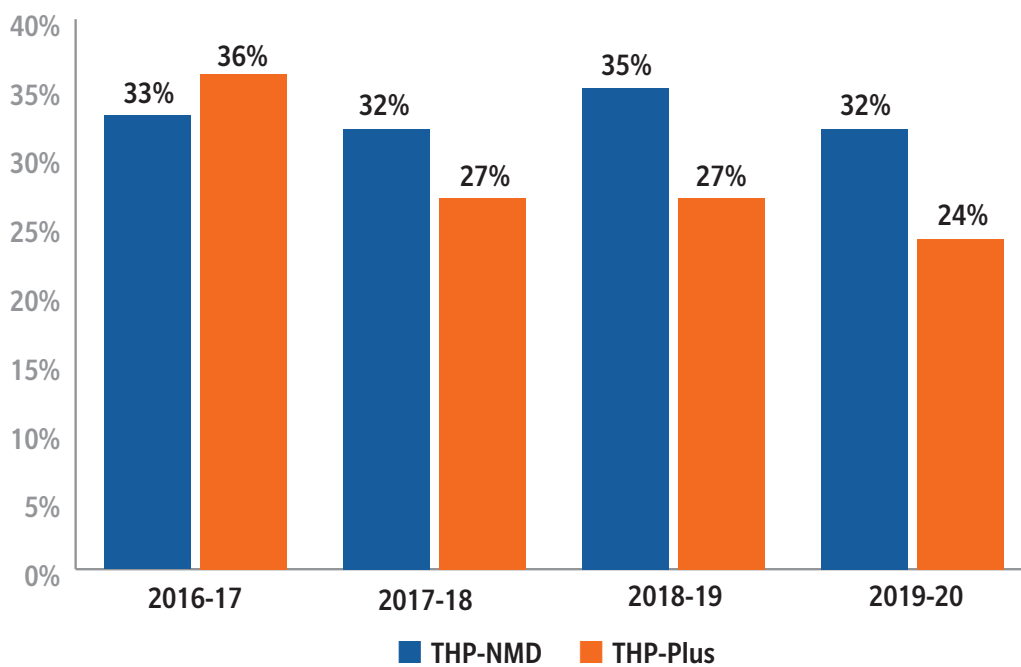
<sup>18</sup> Data was retrieved from the THP-NMD Participant Tracking System by running reports for youth who exited THP-NMD or THP-Plus during FY 2019-20.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

**In both programs, the rate of involuntary exit has decreased since the previous fiscal year, with nearly one in three youth in THP-NMD and nearly one in four youth in THP-Plus leaving the program involuntarily during FY 2019-20.**

As illustrated in Figure 15, of youth who exited a THP-NMD program during FY 2019-20, nearly one in three (32%) youth in THP-NMD and nearly one in four (24%) youth in THP-Plus exited the program on an involuntary basis. These figures have decreased since the previous fiscal year, and for THP-Plus, over the last three years, down 33 percent in since FY 2016-17. An involuntary exit is an exit based on program non-compliance. Involuntary exits can take the form of legal evictions, however the vast majority do not. During FY 2019-20, just two percent of involuntary exits in THP-NMD and two percent in THP-Plus resulted in legal evictions.

**Figure 15: Rate of Involuntary Youth Exits from THP-NMD and THP-Plus During the Fiscal Year<sup>20</sup>**



**THP-Plus providers offer a range of supports to youth as they transition out of the program to ensure they have access to stable housing.**

Survey respondents with THP-Plus programs were asked what actions they take if a youth exiting their program requires continued support with housing and is no longer eligible for THP-Plus. As shown in Figure 16, the vast majority (92%) of THP-Plus programs help youth apply for affordable housing, help youth get on the waiting list for Section 8 (Housing Choice Voucher) (81%), and refer youth to

a specific housing or service provider (81%). Three-quarters (75%) of programs refer youth to the local homeless Coordinated Entry System, and 69 percent help youth access Permanent Supportive Housing if they have a serious mental illness. Eleven percent of THP-Plus programs are run by an organization that also operates a supportive housing program for individuals who age out of THP-Plus.

Other measures providers take to assist youth in making successful transitions when they require continued support include connecting youth to

<sup>20</sup> Data was retrieved from the THP-NMD and THP-Plus Participant Tracking Systems by running reports for youth who exited THP-NMD or THP-Plus over each fiscal year.

apartment managers with whom the program has a relationship with to apply for an apartment in their name, and using private funding to provide extended aftercare/alumni services.

**Figure 16: Transition Support Provided by THP-Plus Providers<sup>21</sup>**

TYPE OF SUPPORT	% of THP-Plus Programs that Offer this Support
Help them apply for affordable housing	92%
Help them get on the waiting list for Section 8 housing	81%
Refer them to a specific housing or service provider	80%
Refer them to go through the local homeless Coordinated Entry System to see what services they may be eligible for	75%
If they have serious mental illness, we specifically try to help them access Permanent Supportive Housing	69%
Our organization has a supportive housing program for individuals who age out of THP-Plus; we serve them through this program	11%
Other	6%

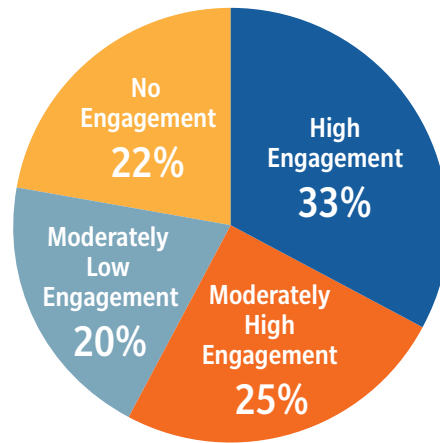
**One in three THP-Plus programs are operated by an organization that is a member of their local homeless Continuum of Care.**

Survey respondents with THP-Plus programs were asked to describe the nature of their organization’s relationship with the local homeless Continuum

of Care (CoC), the organization or agency in their community that administers federal and state homelessness funding to providers. It was reported that one in three THP-Plus programs are operated by an organization that is a member of their local CoC. One in four THP-Plus programs are operated by an organization where someone attends CoC meetings regularly in their community, and one in five where someone attends occasionally or infrequently. Twenty two percent of THP-Plus programs have no relationship with the local CoC. (Figure 17)

Additionally, nearly four in ten (39%) THP-Plus programs’ survey respondents indicated that their organization operates a program for homeless youth or adults funded through a contract with the local CoC.

**Figure 17: THP-Plus Providers’ Relationship with the Local Homeless Continuum of Care (CoC)<sup>22</sup>**



- My organization is a member of the local CoC
- Someone from my organization attends CoC meetings regularly
- Someone from my organization attends CoC meetings occasionally or infrequently
- My organization has no relationship with the local CoC

21 Data was retrieved from an online survey administered by John Burton Advocates for Youth to all THP-Plus providers in July 2020.

22 Ibid.

# FINDINGS: EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME

**T**he proportion of youth who have completed high school increased significantly between entrance and exit for youth in THP-NMD, from 68 to 83 percent.

As illustrated in Figure 18, between entrance and exit from both programs, the percentage of youth with a high school diploma, General Education Diploma (GED) or High School Completion Equivalency Certificate increased, more significantly in THP-NMD, from 68 to 83 percent, and slightly in THP-Plus from 85 to 87 percent. In THP-NMD the rate of increase is 22 percent.



**Figure 18: High School Completion Rates<sup>23</sup>**  
Youth Who Exited THP-NMD & THP-Plus During FY 2019-20

HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION STATUS	THP-NMD		THP-Plus	
	Entrance	Exit	Entrance	Exit
Youth has earned their high school diploma, GED or high school equivalent or higher	68%	83%	85%	87%
Youth has not earned their high school diploma, GED or high school equivalent or higher	32%	17%	15%	13%

**In THP-NMD, many youth enroll in community college and quickly drop out.**

As shown in Figure 19, the most notable change in education status among youth in THP-NMD is withdrawal from college. At entrance to THP-NMD, just four percent of participants had the educational status of “dropped out/withdrew from college.” By exit from THP-Plus, this percentage increased five-fold to 20 percent, indicating that many youth are enrolling in college and subsequently withdrawing.

**In THP-Plus, participants appear to be experiencing more success in enrolling in college and remaining in college.**

In THP-Plus, 19 percent of youth were enrolled in community college at entrance and this figure increased to 27 percent upon exit. Unlike THP-NMD, the percentage that have withdrawn from college remained unchanged, at nine percent at both entrance and exit. (Figure 19)

<sup>23</sup> Data was retrieved from the THP-NMD and THP-Plus Participant Tracking Systems by running reports for youth who exited THP-NMD or THP-Plus during FY 2019-20.

**Figure 19: Educational Status of THP-NMD and THP-Plus Participants at Entrance and Exit<sup>24</sup>**  
 Youth Who Exited THP-NMD & THP-Plus During FY 2019-20

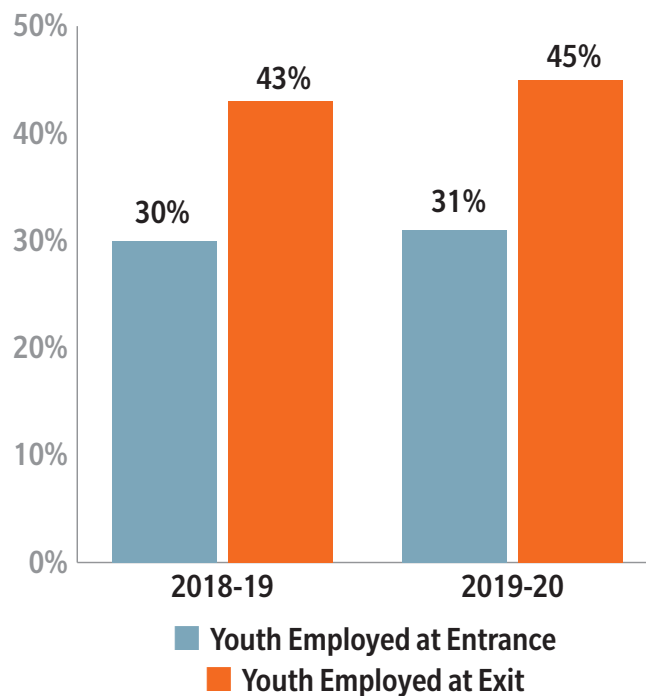
EDUCATIONAL STATUS	THP-NMD		THP-Plus	
	Entrance	Exit	Entrance	Exit
Never/not yet attended college	68%	52%	64%	54%
Dropped out/withdrew from college	4%	20%	9%	9%
Attending 2-year/community college	26%	25%	19%	27%
Received AA/AS, certificate or license from two-year community college	0%	1%	2%	2%
Attending 4-year college/university	2%	2%	5%	4%
Received BA/BS	0%	0%	1%	4%

**THP-NMD participants experienced gains in employment; THP-Plus participants did not.**

As shown in Figure 20, youth who exited a THP-NMD program during FY 2019-20 experienced an increase in their rate of employment, from 31 percent at entrance to 45 percent at exit. Youth who exited a THP-Plus program during FY 2019-20 experienced no progress in employment while in the program.

In THP-NMD, this data is consistent with the previous year. In THP-Plus, more youth entered the program employed in FY 2019-20, while a similar level exited employed. It is important to remember that this data pertains to youth who exited a program over the course of the 2019-20 fiscal year, which means the majority of the time period occurred prior to the onset of the COVID-19 crisis. The next section of the report (page 25) discusses the impact the COVID-19 crisis on youth employment in THP-NMD and THP-Plus, examining survey data and Participant Tracking System data from the end of the fiscal year.

**Figure 20: Youth Employment Rates at Entrance and Exit in THP-NMD<sup>25</sup>**  
 Youth Who Exited THP-NMD & THP-Plus During the Fiscal Year

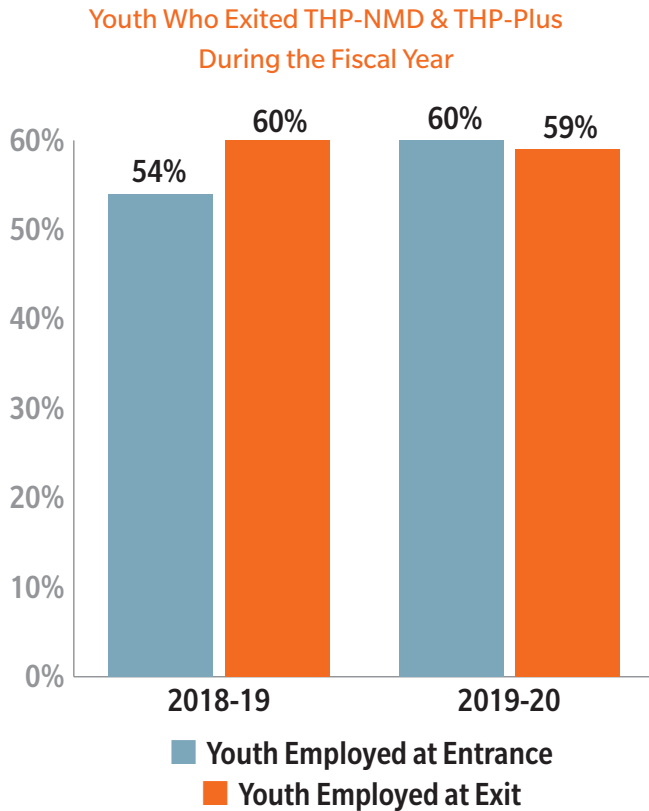


24 Data was retrieved from the THP-NMD and THP-Plus Participant Tracking Systems by running reports for youth who exited THP-NMD or THP-Plus during FY 2019-20.

25 Data was retrieved from the THP-NMD Participant Tracking System by running reports for youth who exited THP-NMD or THP-Plus during FY 2019-20.



**Figure 21: Youth Employment Rates at Entrance and Exit in THP-Plus<sup>26</sup>**



**Employed youth experienced a 12 percent increase in hourly wage during their time in the THP-NMD program and a 20 percent increase in THP-Plus.**

As shown in Figure 22, of youth who exited THP-NMD and THP-Plus programs in FY 2019-20, the average hourly wage of those who were working increased modestly between entrance to and exit from the program. In THP-NMD the average hourly wage increased 12 percent from \$12.10 to \$13.56 (\$1.46 increase), and in THP-Plus by 20 percent from \$12.99 to \$15.62 (\$2.63 increase). These wages are not much higher than California’s state minimum wage as of January 1, 2020 of \$12 per hour for employers with 26 or more employees and \$13 per hour for employers with 25 or fewer employees.



**Figure 22: Average Hourly Wage of Employed Youth<sup>27</sup>**

Youth Who Exited THP-NMD & THP-Plus During FY 2019-20

THP-NMD		THP-Plus	
Entrance	Exit	Entrance	Exit
\$12.10	\$13.56	\$12.99	\$15.62

**The annual income of participants in both programs is low, qualifying many for public benefit programs.**

As shown in Figure 23, for youth working full-time (35-40 hours/week), at exit from the program, these hourly wages equate to gross annual incomes of \$26,515 in THP-NMD and \$30,543 in THP-Plus. For youth working between 10 and 34 hours per week, at exit from the program, these wages equate to gross annual incomes of \$15,555 in THP-NMD and \$17,918 in THP-Plus. Based on their income, many of these youth are eligible for public benefits, such as CalFresh.

<sup>26</sup> Data was retrieved from the THP-Plus Participant Tracking System by running a report for youth who exited THP-Plus during FY 2019-20.

<sup>27</sup> Data was retrieved from the THP-NMD and THP-Plus Participant Tracking Systems by running reports for youth who exited THP-NMD or THP-Plus during FY 2019-20.

**Figure 23: Number of Hours Worked Per Week and Average Gross Annual Earnings of Employed Youth at Exit<sup>28</sup>**

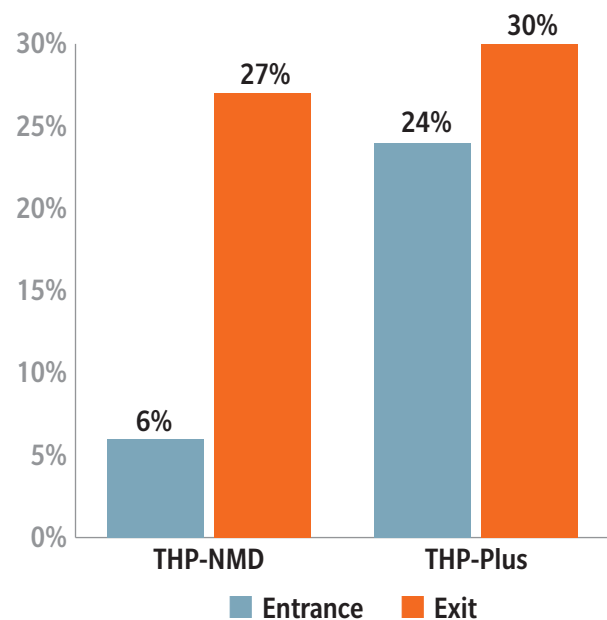
Youth Who Exited THP-NMD & THP-Plus During FY 2019-20

	THP-NMD		THP-Plus	
	% of Employed Youth Working These Hours	Average Annual Earnings	% of Employed Youth Working These Hours	Average Annual Earnings
Working Full-Time (35-40 hours/week)	41%	\$26,515	69%	\$30,543
Working Part-Time (10-34 hours/week)	56%	\$15,555	29%	\$17,918
Working Part-Time (1-9 hours/week)	3%	\$3,535	1%	\$4,072

The proportion of youth accessing public benefits increased more than fourfold in THP-NMD, from 24 percent at entrance to 30 percent at exit.

The proportion of youth accessing certain public benefits increases during their time in the THP-NMD and THP-Plus programs. In THP-NMD the increase is more significant with six percent of youth receiving public benefits at entrance to the program, and more than one-quarter (27%) accessing public benefits at exit from the program. In THP-NMD these benefits include Supplemental Security Income or Social Security Disability Income (SSI/SSDI); CalFresh; Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC); and/or subsidized childcare. In THP-Plus this figure increases from 24 percent at entrance to 30 percent at exit, and includes the aforementioned benefits, in addition to General Assistance (GA) and/or California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs). (Figure 24)

**Figure 24: Percentage of Youth Receiving Public Benefits<sup>29</sup>**  
Youth Who Exited THP-NMD & THP-Plus During FY 2019-20



28 Data was retrieved from the THP-NMD and THP-Plus Participant Tracking Systems by running reports for youth who exited THP-NMD or THP-Plus during FY 2019-20.

29 Ibid.

# IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME

**O**n March 4, 2020, Governor Gavin Newsom declared a State of Emergency resulting from the global COVID-19 outbreak.<sup>30</sup> During the first half of 2020, current and former foster youth, like many, began to feel the impact of the COVID-19 crisis. Survey respondents were asked about how their youth participants were impacted in the areas of education and employment. Data from the Participant Tracking Systems were also analyzed, comparing employment rates and receipt of public benefits between June 30, 2019, the year before the pandemic ensued, and June 30, 2020 in the midst of the public health and economic crisis.

**Two in five youth in THP-NMD who graduated high school in spring 2020 did not enroll in post-secondary education in the fall due to COVID-19.**

Survey respondents were asked how many of the youth in their programs that graduated high school in spring 2020 or that were enrolled in post-secondary education in spring 2020, did not enroll or re-enroll in post-secondary education in the fall due to the COVID-19 crisis. As shown in Figure 25, the demographic that appears most significantly impacted is recent high school graduates. In THP-NMD which serves a younger subset of youth, many of whom are still completing high school, a total of 40 percent who graduated high school in the spring of 2020 did not enroll in post-secondary education in the fall due to COVID-19. Comparatively, 20 percent of youth in THP-NMD who were enrolled in post-secondary education in spring 2020 did not re-enroll in the fall due to COVID-19.



**Figure 25: Percent of Youth That Did Not Enroll or Re-Enroll in Post-Secondary Education Due to the COVID-19 Crisis<sup>31</sup>**

	THP-NMD	THP-Plus
% of youth who graduated high school in spring 2020 that did not enroll in post-secondary education in fall 2020 due to COVID-19	40%	17%
% of youth who were enrolled in post-secondary education in spring 2020 who did not re-enroll in fall 2020 due to COVID-19	20%	10%

30 Executive Department, State of California. Proclamation of a State of Emergency (2020). <https://www.gov.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/3.4.20-Coronavirus-SOE-Proclamation.pdf>

31 Data was retrieved from an online survey administered by John Burton Advocates for Youth to all THP-NMD and THP-Plus providers in July 2020.



**Nearly four out of five (79%) youth in THP-NMD and three out of five (60%) in THP-Plus who were employed at the onset of the COVID-19 outbreak experienced job loss or a reduction in hours.**

Survey respondents were asked how many of the youth in their programs that were employed at the onset of the COVID-19 outbreak either experienced job loss or a reduction in hours due to the COVID-19 crisis. Youth in both programs experienced significant employment loss as a result of COVID-19, with youth in THP-NMD being most heavily impacted.

As shown in Figure 26, in THP-NMD, 79 percent of youth experienced a loss or reduction in employment, with nearly half (46%) of employed youth having lost their jobs and one-third (33%) having lost hours due to the COVID-19 crisis. In THP-Plus, 60 percent of employed youth either lost hours or lost their job, with 29 percent having lost their jobs and 31 percent having experienced a reduction in hours.

**Figure 26: Percent of Employed Youth Who Experienced Job Loss or Reduction in Hours Due to the COVID-19 Crisis<sup>32</sup>**

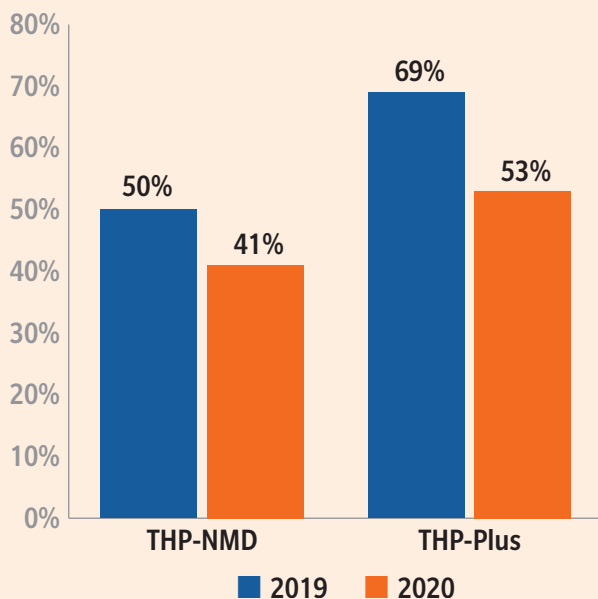
	THP-NMD	THP-Plus
% of employed youth who lost their jobs due to COVID-19	46%	29%
% of employed youth who lost hours due to COVID-19	33%	31%
% of employed youth who either lost hours or lost their job as a result of COVID-19	79%	60%

<sup>32</sup> Data was retrieved from an online survey administered by John Burton Advocates for Youth to all THP-NMD and THP-Plus providers in July 2020.

**As of June 30, 2020, the employment rate of youth has dropped 18 percent in THP-NMD and 23 percent in THP-Plus compared to June 30, 2019.**

Figure 27 shows the proportion of youth who were employed in each program on June 30, 2019 and June 30, 2020, based on data from the Participant Tracking Systems. The data show a reduction in the percentage of employed youth in both programs, an 18 percent reduction in THP-NMD and a 23 percent reduction in THP-Plus. Half (50%) of the youth in THP-NMD were employed in 2019, dropping to 41 percent in 2020. More than two-thirds (69%) of the youth in THP-Plus were employed in 2019, dropping to 53 percent in 2020.

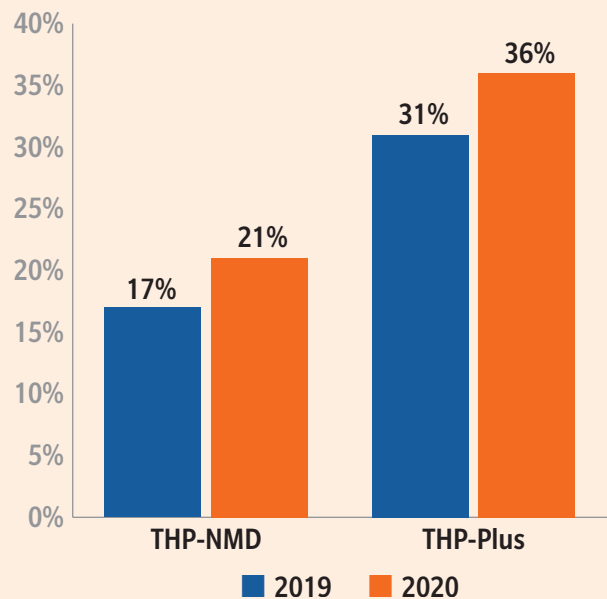
**Figure 27: Percentage of Youth Participating in THP-NMD & THP-Plus Who Were Employed as of June 30th<sup>33</sup>**



**The proportion of youth in THP-NMD and THP-Plus who were receiving public benefits as of June 30, 2020 increased slightly from June 30, 2019.**

Figure 28 shows the proportion of youth in each program who were receiving certain public benefits on June 30, 2019 and June 30, 2020, based on data from the Participant Tracking Systems. In THP-NMD these benefits include SSI/SSDI, CalFresh, WIC, and/or subsidized childcare. In THP-Plus these benefits include all of the aforementioned benefits in addition to GA and/or CalWORKs. The data show a small increase in the percentage of youth receiving public benefits in both programs, from 17 to 21 percent in THP-NMD and 31 to 36 percent in THP-Plus.

**Figure 28: Percentage of Youth Participating in THP-NMD & THP-Plus Who Were Receiving Public Benefits as of June 30th<sup>34</sup>**



33 Data was retrieved from the THP-NMD and THP-Plus Participant Tracking Systems by running quarterly reports for youth in the program as of June 30, 2019 and June 30, 2020.

34 Ibid.

# FINDINGS: HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

## All youth in THP-Plus were enrolled in health insurance upon exit from the program.

One-hundred percent of youth who exited a THP-Plus program during FY 2019-20 reported being enrolled in health insurance upon exit from the program.<sup>35</sup> The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act provides former foster youth free health insurance until the age of 26.<sup>36</sup> 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-Plus are eligible for extended Medi-Cal, and all youth participating in THP-NMD are automatically covered by Medi-Cal because they are dependents of the child welfare or juvenile probation systems.

## One in four youth in THP-NMD and one in five youth in THP-Plus were receiving services for mental, physical, learning or developmental disabilities at exit from the program.<sup>37</sup>

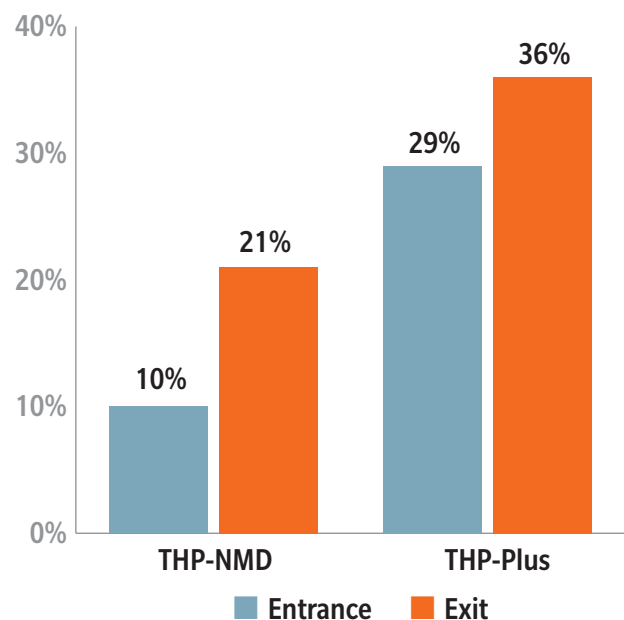
Of youth who exited a program during FY 2019-20, one in four youth (25%) in THP-NMD and one in five youth (20%) in THP-Plus were receiving services for mental health, substance abuse, or educational/learning, physical or developmental disabilities at exit from the program.<sup>38</sup>

## During their time in the program, the proportion of young women who are custodial parents more than doubled in THP-NMD and increased 24 percent in THP-Plus.

Of young women who exited a THP-NMD program during FY 2019-20, the proportion who were custodial mothers more than doubled, from 10 percent at entrance to 21 percent at exit. In THP-Plus, the proportion of custodial mothers increased 24 percent, from 29 percent at entrance to 36 percent at exit. (Figure 29)

When considering custodial parents of both genders, the proportion of custodial parents increases from six percent at entrance to 13 percent at exit from THP-NMD, and 20 percent at entrance to 27 percent at exit in THP-Plus.

**Figure 29: Percentage of Female Participants Who Were Custodial Parents<sup>39</sup>**  
Youth Who Exited THP-NMD & THP-Plus During FY 2019-20



35 Data was retrieved from the THP-Plus Participant Tracking System by running a report for youth who exited THP-Plus during FY 2019-20.

36 H.R. 3590, 111th Cong. (2010)

37 Data was retrieved from the THP-NMD and THP-Plus Participant Tracking Systems by running reports for youth who exited THP-NMD or THP-Plus during FY 2019-20.

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid.

In THP-NMD and THP-Plus, a total of 657 children lived with a parent participating in the program.

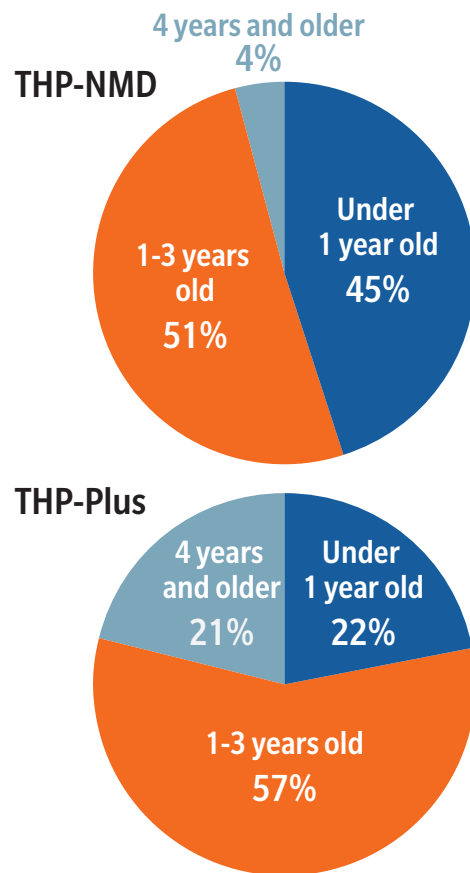
Survey respondents were asked about the number of children who lived with a parent who was participating in the THP-NMD or THP-Plus program. As shown in Figure 30, together, 657 children lived with a parent participating in the program as of June 30, 2020. As shown in Figure 31, in THP-NMD the children tend to be younger, with 45 percent under one years old, 51 percent between one and three years old, and just four percent four years or older. In THP-Plus, 22 percent of the children are under one, 57 percent are between one and three, and 21 percent are four or older.

**Figure 30: Number of Children Residing with a Parent in THP-NMD & THP-Plus as of June 30, 2020**

	THP-NMD	THP-Plus	Total
Number of Children	341	316	657



**Figure 31: Age Range of Children Residing with a Parent in THP-NMD or THP-Plus as of June 30, 2020<sup>40</sup>**



**One in four expectant mothers in THP-NMD and THP-Plus received services from a home visitation program such as Nurse Family Partnership during FY 2019-20.**

Survey respondents were asked about the frequency at which expectant and new mothers in their programs were referred to and received services from a home visitation program such as Nurse Family Partnership. Of the young women who were pregnant during their time in THP-NMD or THP-Plus during FY 2019-20, more than one in three (35%) in THP-NMD and less than half (47%) in THP-Plus were referred to a home visitation program such as Nurse Family Partnership during their pregnancy by the county child welfare agency and/or the THP-NMD or THP-Plus provider. Nearly

<sup>40</sup> Data was retrieved from an online survey administered by John Burton Advocates for Youth to all THP-NMD and THP-Plus providers in July 2020.

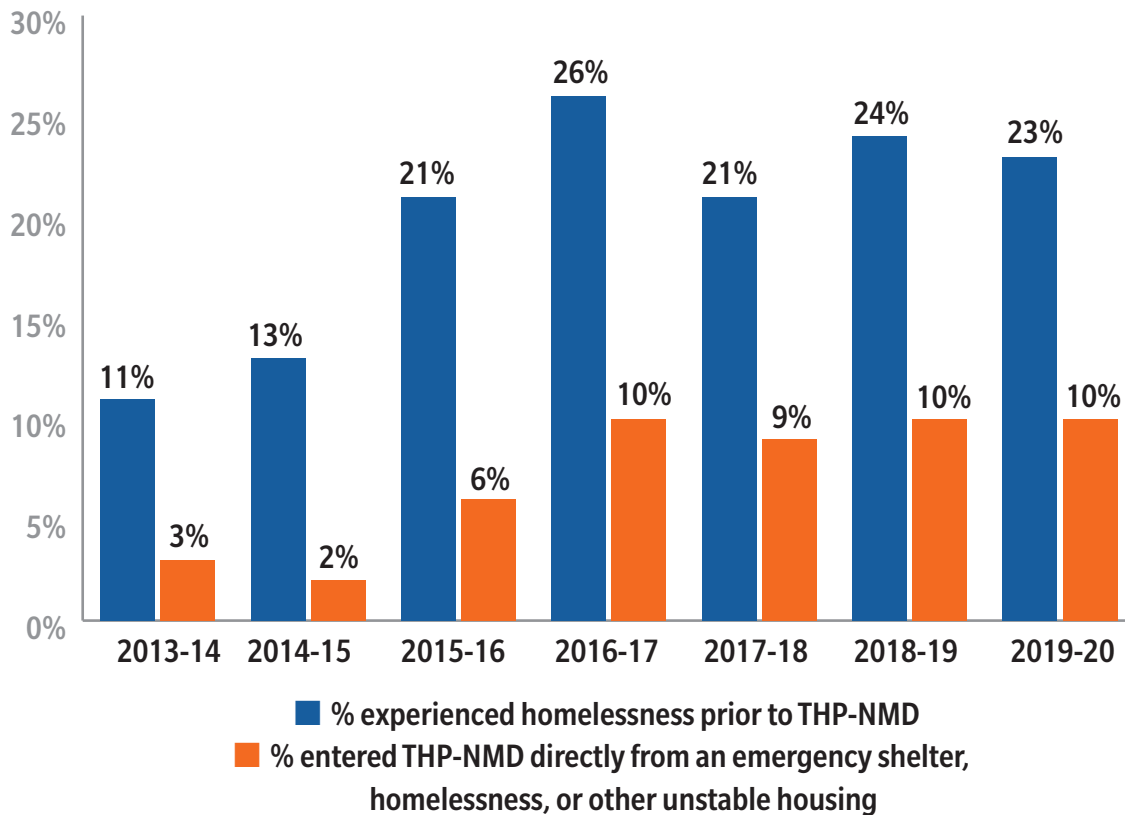
one in four pregnant young women (24%) in both THP-NMD and THP-Plus received services from a home visitation program.

Of the first-time mothers with a child under age 2 who participated in THP-NMD or THP-Plus during FY 2019-20, 18 percent in THP-NMD and 13 percent in THP-Plus received services from a home visitation program such as Nurse Family Partnership.

**Close to one in four youth experienced homelessness while in foster care, prior to entering THP-NMD.**

As illustrated in Figure 32, of youth who entered THP-NMD during FY 2018-19, close to one in four (23%) had experienced homelessness prior to entering THP-NMD, consistent with the previous fiscal year (24%). During FY 2019-20, ten percent of youth entered THP-NMD directly from an emergency shelter, homelessness or other unstable housing, also consistent with the previous year.

**Figure 32: Experience of Homelessness—THP-NMD<sup>41</sup>**  
Youth Who Entered THP-NMD During the Fiscal Year



<sup>41</sup> Data was retrieved from an online survey administered by John Burton Advocates for Youth to all THP-NMD and THP-Plus providers in July 2020.



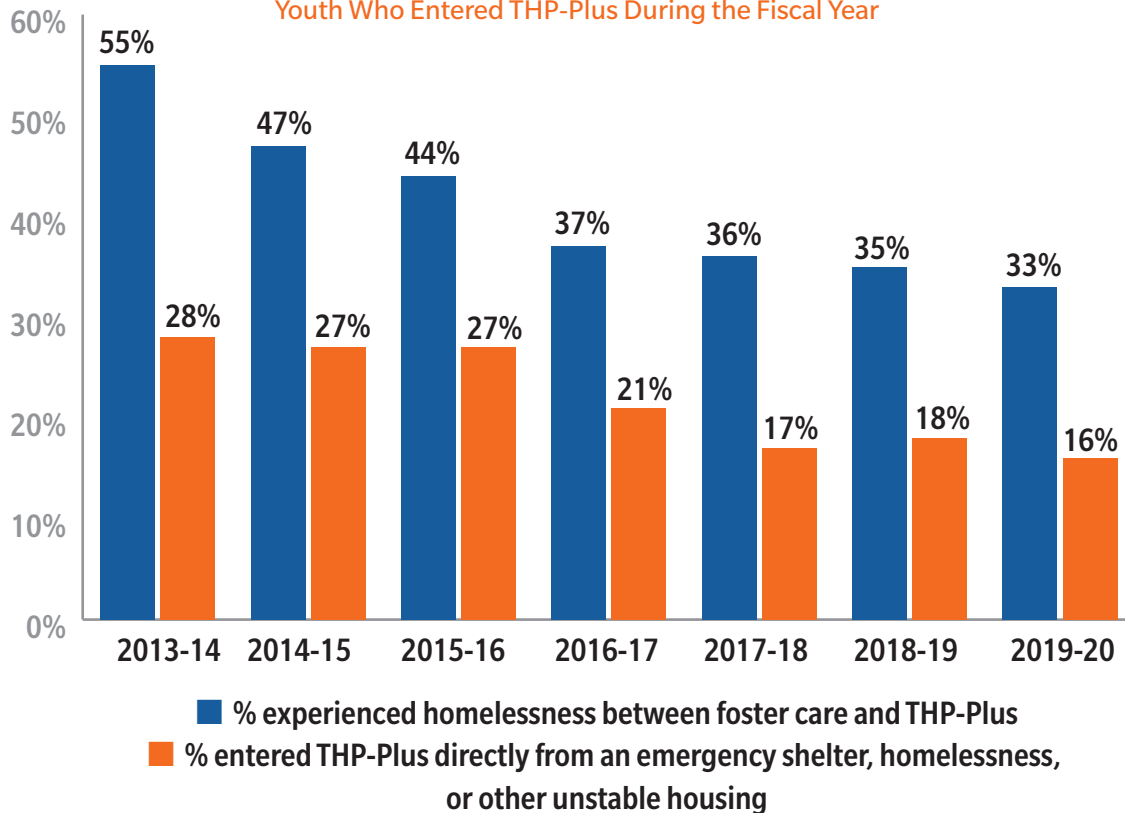
**One in three youth experienced homelessness prior to entering THP-Plus, a decrease from the previous six consecutive years, but still significant.**

As shown in Figure 33, since FY 2013-14, the rate of homelessness among youth prior to entering THP-Plus has decreased from a high of 55 percent. Of youth who exited a THP-Plus program during FY 2019-20, one in three (33%) youth had experienced homeless between leaving

foster care and entering THP-Plus. The rate of youth entering THP-Plus directly from an emergency shelter, homelessness or other unstable housing has also decreased over the last six years, from 28 percent in FY 2013-14 to 16 percent in FY 2019-20.



**Figure 33: Experience of Homelessness—THP-Plus<sup>42</sup>**  
 Youth Who Entered THP-Plus During the Fiscal Year



<sup>42</sup> Data was retrieved from the THP-Plus Participant Tracking System by running reports for youth who exited THP-NMD or THP-Plus over the fiscal year.

## PARTICIPANT PROFILE: Ria Hansia, 23

When Ria entered foster care at age 15 there was a lot of moving around. The instability made high school challenging and left her without a clear plan for college. Just a few months before her 18th birthday, Ria's foster mom became her guardian and shortly after, Ria gave birth to her daughter, Lila. While Ria's relationship with her foster mom is a positive one, the home was full of other family members. Ria describes her experience with postpartum depression being exacerbated by her environment. "There were challenges present. I was living with a lot of people. If I would buy milk—the milk would be gone. I needed peace, stability, and support."

With no other family to turn to and a six-month old baby, Ria reached out to Patty from Marin County's Independent Living Skills Program. Although Ria exited foster care to guardianship just before her 18th birthday, making her ineligible for THP-Plus, Patty helped arrange for the county to fund her participation in the program, regardless. Ria started in Alternative Family Services' THP-Plus program after three months of waiting for a slot to open up.

Ria was provided a studio apartment, weekly case management, independent living skills classes, and assistance with raising Lila. "I had a really awesome THP social worker, Cheryl. Cheryl would stroll Lila around the block and help take care of her during my classes when I didn't have childcare." In the program, Ria learned to take care of herself and Lila, to find a routine and to prioritize her time as a young mother. Ria learned about finances, how to set a budget, write a check, and file her taxes. "I learned how to use Turbo Tax and Credit Karma to check your credit score and file taxes. I'm excited to do my taxes next year now knowing I qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credits, Child Tax Credit, and Renters Credit."



In her second year in the program, Ria took advantage of an opportunity to participate in the Year Up program and landed an internship at Salesforce after six months. As her career was just getting started, Ria was nearing the end of her 24 months in the THP-Plus program. Ria was made an ever-so-timely offer from Salesforce to officially join their team as a Business Analyst, providing Ria enough income to afford her own apartment in San Rafael with her daughter. Ria views THP-Plus as a lifesaving steppingstone. "THP-Plus saved my life. If I didn't have stable housing, I wouldn't have been able to take advantage of Year Up and ultimately take care of my family."

Now at age 23, Ria looks forward to saving up enough money to afford a two bedroom so Lila, now three years old, can have her own room. Ria is working on building her credit so she can purchase a car and someday, a house of their own. She is determined to provide for Lila, the things she did not experience as a child, like ballet classes. "I'm excited to be able to do adult things...I'm starting to excel and will excel from here on out. I'm happy now."

*Alternative Family Services is located in Marin County.*

# POLICY AND PRACTICE IMPLICATIONS

## Recommendations for the California State Legislature

### Eliminate suspension of the \$8 million Transitional Housing Program in the FY 2021-22 state budget.

The FY 2019-20 state budget included \$8 million for county child welfare agencies to assist youth age 18 to 25 secure and maintain housing, with priority given to young adults formerly in the state's foster care or probation systems.<sup>43</sup> This funding, administered by the Department of Housing and Community Development, was intended for THP-Plus, with broader eligibility and participation parameters. As of June 30, 2020, 539 youth were on the waiting list for the THP-Plus program. This funding is critical, not only because of the considerable demand for the THP-Plus program among currently eligible youth, but also in its potential to serve a broader subset of former foster and probation youth. Providers reported that 170 youth attempted to access their THP-Plus programs who exited care prior to age 18, therefore making them ineligible for THP-Plus. During the current public health crisis and economic recession, investment in housing support for vulnerable populations is more important than ever.

### Require in state law that county social workers must assist youth with identifying housing for their Supervised Independent Living Placement if they are currently homeless or housing insecure.

Currently, state guidance indicates that non-minor dependents (NMDs) being placed in Supervised Independent Living Placements (SILPs) are responsible for identifying their own housing.<sup>44</sup> For some NMDs—particularly those with existing connections to family members or other caring adults available to assist them should they need support, this requirement may be appropriate. However, for those NMDs whose only known supportive adult is their county social worker or probation officer, this requirement raises concerns. Close to one in four (23%) youth experienced homelessness while in foster care prior to entering THP-NMD over the 2019-20 Fiscal Year. State law should clarify that for NMDs experiencing homelessness while in foster care, assistance must be provided or arranged by the county social worker or probation officer to help resolve the NMD's homelessness and identify housing for their SILP.

43 Senate Bill 80 (Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review), Chapter 27 (2019).

44 California Department of Social Services. All County Letter 11-77 (2011). <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/lettersnotices/entres/getinfo/acl/2011/11-77.pdf>

**→ Continue the extended foster care COVID-19 extension beyond June 30, 2021 if California’s economic and public health conditions do not improve.**

In response to the COVID-19 crisis, the California State Legislature established an extension of the extended foster care program so that youth turning 21 between April 17, 2020 and the end of the 2021 fiscal year could remain in care until June 30, 2021. This ensures that youth are not exiting foster care—often losing their housing and a portion of their monthly income—during the public health crisis and economic recession. Nearly four out of five youth (79%) in THP-NMD and three out of five (60%) in THP-Plus who were employed at the onset of the COVID-19 outbreak experienced job loss or reduction in hours. In order to ensure youth are not exiting extended foster care unemployed and housing insecure or homeless, the state legislature should consider lengthening the extension of extended foster care for additional time in the FY 2021-22 state budget, should the state’s economic and public health conditions not improve.

**→ Modify eligibility for programs supporting former foster youth, including THP-Plus and campus support programs.**

THP-Plus providers report that former foster youth in need of housing attempt to access their THP-Plus programs but are not eligible under current THP-Plus eligibility criteria. Like many other programs, current eligibility criteria for THP-Plus requires youth to have been in foster care at a specific age. For THP-Plus this age is 18. A similar obstacle exists on college campuses for students attempting to participate in foster youth campus support programs. For the NextUp program at California Community Colleges a youth must have been in care at age 16 to participate.



Eligibility for these programs should be modified in alignment with similar programs and in recognition that an exit to permanency does not erase or mitigate the trauma a young person has already experienced as a child or youth. The THP-Plus program should be modified so that youth in care up to age 16 may access the program should they become housing insecure after turning 18. This would align THP-Plus with eligibility for the county-administered Independent Living Skills Program.

Programs on college campuses for foster youth, like NextUp, should be modified so that youth in care at age 13 would be eligible, in order to align with financial aid eligibility. Youth who were in care after turning 13 are automatically considered independent students on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

**→ Include the needs of homeless youth in a bold response to homelessness in California.**

THP-Plus providers reported that 170 youth attempted to access their THP-Plus programs who exited care prior to age 18. In fact, thousands of youth are touched by the foster care system at some point in their childhood or adolescence that do not remain in care until age 18, 16 or even 13. It is critical that in addition to providing a robust program for youth who age out of foster care, the state establish a strong safety net for the broader subset of homeless youth, many of

whom previously spent time in the foster care system. The California State Legislature should establish a permanent revenue source to address homelessness, with a minimum percentage of this funding directed toward addressing homelessness among youth.

### **Establish funding for basic needs centers at California Community Colleges.**

At entrance to THP-NMD, just four percent of participants had the educational status of “Dropped out/withdrew from college.” By exit from THP-Plus, this percentage increased five-fold to 20 percent, indicating that many youth are enrolling in college and subsequently withdrawing. The COVID-19 crisis has only worsened conditions for foster youth, who already required a great amount of support to persist in college. Youth not only need support with academics and planning, they also need support with basic needs. In order to ensure that there are adequate supports for all foster youth pursuing their college goals, the California State Legislature should establish funding for the creation of basic needs centers on college campuses. These centers serve a broad subset of students, and do not require a student to have been in foster care at a certain age to access support.

### **Require collection of information about the reproductive and sexual health care of youth in foster care.**

In THP-NMD, 13 percent of youth are custodial parents when they exit the program. For young women specifically, nearly one in four (24%) exit THP-NMD as custodial mothers. While data

is collected on the rate of parenthood among foster youth, no data is required to be collected on the health outcomes of parenting youth and their children. The California Youth Transitions to Adulthood (CaYOUTH) study indicated that of foster youth at age 17 who reported a pregnancy, 43 percent resulted in a stillbirth or miscarriage.<sup>45</sup> This is well over double the rate of pregnancies among females ages 15-19 in the general community that result in a miscarriage (15%). Sexually Transmitted Infection rates also appear to be higher among foster youth, based on a 2017 national survey.<sup>46</sup>

In order to consider policy changes that may lead to improved outcomes, regular data must be collected on the reproductive and sexual health of foster youth. Collecting this data will not only address disproportionality in outcomes among foster youth, but also address racial disparities. Maternal and infant health outcomes among African-Americans—whom are overrepresented in foster care—are disproportionately poor: African-American females are at a higher risk for a range of medical conditions that threaten their lives and their infants’ lives, and die of pregnancy-related causes at a rate about three times higher than those of white women.<sup>47,48</sup> The legislature should require collection of annual data on the reproductive and sexual health care of youth in foster care in order to address disproportionality among both foster youth and African-American youth.

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45 Courtney et al., Findings from the California Youth Transitions to Adulthood Study: Conditions at Age 17 (2014).

46 Fryar, G., Jordan, E., and DeVooght, K. “Supporting Young People Transitioning from Foster Care: Findings from a National Survey.” Child Trends (2017). <https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/SYPTFC-Findings-from-a-National-Survey-11.29.17.pdf>

47 Novoa, C., Hamm, K. and Phadke, S. (2019) Eliminating Racial Disparities in Maternal and Infant Mortality. Center for American Progress. Retrieved from <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/women/reports/2019/05/02/469186/eliminating-racial-disparities-maternal-infant-mortality/#fn-469186-11>

48 Rabin, R.C. (2019, May 7). Huge Racial Disparities Found in Deaths Linked to Pregnancy. New York Times. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/07/health/pregnancy-deaths-.html>

## **Establish a prenatal benefit for expectant mothers in foster care.**

As of June 30, 2020, a total of 341 children resided in the THP-NMD program with a parent participating in the program. Currently, youth in foster care who are custodial parents receive \$900 per month to assist with the cost of caring for their child. This monthly benefit does not begin until the birth of the child, and due to administrative delays, sometimes later, even though expectant parents must purchase several key pieces of equipment and supplies prior to the birth of their child, including a car seat, crib or bassinet, changing table, diapers, clothing, and much more.

The CalYOUTH study indicated more than one in five (21%) foster youth at age 17 who reported a pregnancy, never received prenatal care.<sup>49</sup> Further, during FY 2019-20, just over one in three (35%) youth in THP-NMD were referred to a home visitation program such as Nurse Family Partnership during their pregnancy by the county child welfare agency or provider, and less than one in four (24%) received home visitation services.

New policies and protocols are necessary to assist foster youth leading up to a birth, in order to ensure new mothers have the necessary equipment and supplies for their babies, and to encourage earlier disclosure of pregnancy in order to enable the county social worker, attorney, placement staff or Resource Parent to immediately support that youth in accessing prenatal care and key services. In Los Angeles County, the “Early Infant Supplement” is provided during the 7th, 8th and 9th month of pregnancy at a reduced amount (\$415) intended for purchasing items or services to help prepare for the birth of the infant.<sup>50</sup> This prenatal benefit should be established statewide.

## **Recommendations for State Agencies** **Department of Social Services**

### **Establish a minimum standard for THP-Plus rates in statute.**

The average THP-Plus rate has not kept pace with the rising cost of housing and has no mandatory cost of living increase attached to it. The scattered site model, which accounts for 72 percent of the state’s THP-Plus housing capacity has grown just 11 percent since FY 2012-13. The state was required to issue a new rate methodology and schedule for THP-Plus by December 31, 2019, in order to amend the language currently in statute tying the THP-Plus rate to 70 percent of the average foster care expenditures for youth in group homes, which are being phased out as a foster care placement as part of California’s Continuum of Care Reform.<sup>51</sup> This deadline was not met, and presents a timely opportunity to set a quality standard for the THP-Plus program. The state should amend the language in statute to specify a minimum standard for THP-Plus rates.

### **Establish a statewide standard for county utilization and management of THP-NMD waiting lists.**

There is no statewide requirement regarding utilization or management of waiting lists for THP-NMD. This results in great variation in whether and how waiting lists are maintained, and obstacles to identifying local demand for the program. A statewide standard should be established requiring counties to maintain waiting lists for THP-NMD with a specified length of time a youth can remain on the list and the frequency at which youth are contacted about their current housing status and continued need for or interest in the program. With the number of youth on the waiting list for THP-NMD more than doubling in FY 2019-20, the

49 Courtney et al., Findings from the California Youth Transitions to Adulthood Study: Conditions at Age 17 (2014).

50 Los Angeles County Department of Child and Family Services, Child Welfare Policy Manual – Youth Reproductive Health and Pregnancy. [http://policy.dcfslacounty.gov/#Youth\\_Development\\_Reprod.htm?Highlight=EPY](http://policy.dcfslacounty.gov/#Youth_Development_Reprod.htm?Highlight=EPY)

51 California Welfare and Institutions Code §11403.3(a)(2)

waiting list is an important tool for fulfilling the new requirement set forth in Assembly Bill 1979 (2020, Friedman), which will take effect January 1, 2021. AB 1979 requires county placement agencies to evaluate the county's placement resources and programs in relation to the needs of non-minor dependents and to examine its ability to meet the emergency housing needs of non-minor dependents.<sup>52</sup>

### **Prioritize timely implementation of the THP-NMD Housing Supplement.**

Over the last several years, concerns have been raised about the increase in the cost of housing outpacing the growth in the THP-NMD rate. Providers in some counties were utilizing such a sizable portion of the rate for rental costs, that not nearly enough was leftover to fund the critical supportive services offered in THP-NMD. This diminished purchasing power also created an obstacle to THP-NMD in counties where providers struggled to identify viable apartments for lease that were affordable with the given rate.

In the FY 2020-21 state budget, \$4 million was included to address this concern for youth placed in THP-NMD. The THP-NMD Housing Supplement provides a supplemental payment to THP-NMD providers based on the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Fair Market Rent in counties with higher rental costs.<sup>53</sup> The THP-NMD Housing Supplement will increase access to the placement and ensure adequate funding is retained to provide critical supportive services, while acquiring quality housing for participants. It will also enable providers to offer private, one-bedroom apartments to youth with children of their own as there is a higher supplement amount for custodial parents. The THP-NMD Housing Supplement is being implemented on a phased-in basis, depending



upon which payment system a county utilizes, either by July 1, 2021 or September 1, 2022. As of the writing of this report, the state is on track for timely implementation, and given the high demand for THP-NMD as illustrated by the 41 percent increase in the number of youth waiting for the placement, now confounded by the COVID-19 pandemic, the state should continue to prioritize its implementation.

### **Expedite the issuance of the new THP-NMD licensing standards.**

While support with post-secondary education is a required supportive service in THP-NMD, the type and intensity of the support are not specified in the Community Care Licensing Standards governing the placement. These regulations not only govern the placement at the state level, but often inform the expectations set at the county level between the child welfare agency and the THP-NMD provider. In 2018 the California Department of Social Services convened a workgroup of stakeholders to make recommendations for amendments to the existing licensing standards. The amended regulations specify that support should be provided with applying for and

52 Assembly Bill 1979 (Friedman), Chapter 141 (2020).

53 Fair Market Rent (FMR) is the system developed by HUD to determine the allowable rent level for individuals who participate in their Housing Choice Voucher program. FMRs are set at a 40% median and include the cost of housing and utilities, apart from phone, cable, and internet. Each year, HUD calculates the FMR for 530 metropolitan areas and 2,045 nonmetropolitan county areas, including all 58 counties in California. FMRs are released at the start of each new fiscal year.

enrolling in post-secondary education, financial aid, accessing tutoring and other academic support, planning for transportation and supplies, connecting with on-campus supports and resources, and minimizing students' work obligation.

Since 2018 the amended regulations have been making their way through the internal review process and have yet to be issued. Given the limited progress made by THP-NMD participants in post-secondary education, the issuance of the new regulations should be prioritized by the department.

## **Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency**

### **Immediately disburse the \$8 million Transitional Housing Program funding.**

Although the \$8 million Transitional Housing Program funding administered by the Department of Housing and Community Development within California's Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency was included in the FY 2019-20 state budget, as of November 1, 2020, county child welfare agencies have not yet received their 2019-20 disbursement, as a result of cumbersome state contracting requirements and exacerbated by a backlog stemming from the COVID-19 crisis. In addition to the critical need for increased funding for housing support for former foster youth as illustrated by a waiting list of 539 youth as of June 30, 2020, this delay also shortens the time that county child welfare agencies have to spend the funds. The year-long delay of the disbursement of these funds to county child welfare agencies in the face of a public health and housing crisis and economic recession is deeply concerning and should warrant immediate disbursement.

### **Include foster care data from the Department of Social Services in the second phase of development of the Homeless Data Integration System.**

The Homeless Data Integration System (HDIS) will

allow the state to access and compile standardized homelessness data collected by individual Continuums of Care in order to make data-driven policy decisions aimed at preventing and ending homelessness in California. The HDIS will be administered by the Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council within the California Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency, and is slated to be operational in early 2021, drawing client data from the federal Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) during its first phase of implementation. During the second phase it is envisioned that the system will also pull client data from other state systems to provide a more holistic picture of state and locally provided services. With one in three (33%) youth experiencing homelessness between exiting foster care and entering the THP-Plus program, and 16 percent entering THP-Plus directly from homelessness, foster care data should be included in the second phase of the project.


## **Recommendations for Counties and Providers**

### **Set county THP-Plus rates according to the local cost of housing and services provision.**

The regional variation in THP-Plus rates is an asset to the program because the cost of housing varies so greatly across the state. However, unfortunately not all counties' rates are set at a level that is in line with the local cost of housing. Further, many counties have not increased their rates in several years, leaving THP-Plus providers with diminished purchasing power on the private rental market. This results in stifling a program's ability to provide quality apartments and a deep level of services—the more of the rate that goes to the housing, the less there is to fund staffing and services. Counties should set their THP-Plus rates according to the local cost of renting apartments and providing services, taking local minimum wage ordinances into account. Counties can look to HUD's Fair Market Rent for a minimum threshold at which



to set the housing portion of their THP-Plus rate, in addition to consulting with their THP-Plus provider(s) about the true cost of renting in the neighborhood(s) where they lease.


 **Offer a higher THP-Plus rate for youth who are custodial parents.**

With 36 percent of young women exiting the THP-Plus program as custodial parents, it's critical that providers are equipped with the resources necessary to serve parenting youth, and that obstacles do not exist that deter providers from serving them. Providers report that the cost of serving parenting youth and their children are considerably higher than non-parenting youth as a result of increased staffing costs, additional services, additional household supplies and greater housing accommodations.


Currently, just two counties—Santa Clara and San Mateo—provide a parenting rate to cover the increased cost of serving parenting youth in THP-Plus. Santa Clara County's standard THP-Plus rate is \$2,400 per youth per month, but for parenting youth it is set at \$2,800. In San Mateo, the standard THP-Plus rate is \$3,146, and the parenting THP-Plus rate is \$3,626. This enables these counties' providers to offer the higher level of service necessary to adequately meet the needs of parenting youth and their children, such as providing more intensive case management focused on the needs of the family versus just the parent, monthly parenting groups, and covering the higher costs of providing private housing (no roommates) and supplies related to the child.

 **Increase the number of THP-NMD housing slots utilized in counties with waiting lists.**

The number of youth on waiting lists for THP-NMD increased by 41 percent between June 30, 2019 and June 30, 2020, from 341 to 482. For youth who do not pass a SILP readiness assessment, and for whom a Resource Family is not an option, THP-NMD is often the only viable alternative. In interviews with counties, some county representatives report that they would like to place additional youth in THP-NMD, but that the local THP-NMD providers cannot increase their capacity or cannot identify appropriate housing that is affordable with the current rate. Some THP-NMD providers report that counties will not place additional youth in THP-NMD, or their county contracting requirements present significant challenges to operating the program. Counties and providers must work together to expand THP-NMD by identifying local obstacles with a plan to jointly address them.

 **Extend THP-Plus for youth regardless of age or program duration as authorized in the FY 2020-21 state budget.**

In the FY 2020-21 state budget, as a COVID-19 response, counties were authorized to allow youth to remain in THP-Plus regardless of age eligibility or program duration until June 30, 2021. This optional THP-Plus extension was included in the budget alongside the mandatory extension of extended foster care. Youth turning 21 between April 17, 2020 and June 30, 2021 are permitted to remain in extended foster care until June 30, 2021. Because youth will not be exiting foster care at age 21, these 21-year-olds will not be accessing the THP-Plus program, therefore providing an opportunity for THP-Plus programs to allow their participants to also remain in place, but with no additional cost to the program. With 60 percent of employed youth in THP-Plus having experienced job loss or a reduction in hours, the THP-Plus extension is a low-barrier way for counties to provide a deep level of support to youth who are feeling the brunt of the recession.


 **Fully implement the provisions included in the state budget to allow youth to remain in foster care after age 21 and provide flexibility related to participation conditions.**

Also in response to the COVID-19 crisis, the California State Legislature established an extension of the extended foster care program so that youth turning 21 between April 17, 2020 and the end of the 2021 fiscal year could remain in care until June 30, 2021. Unfortunately, several counties reported they would not implement this legal mandate until the Department of Social Services released the All County Letter providing more detailed guidance on this policy, which occurred October 23, 2020.<sup>54</sup> The delay in the release of this guidance resulted in a nearly four-month delay in this COVID-19 response being offered to a youth aging out of extended foster care.

Nearly four out of five youth (79%) in THP-NMD and three out of five (60%) in THP-Plus who were employed at the onset of the COVID-19 outbreak experienced job loss or reduction in hours. On June 30, 2019, 50 percent of youth in THP-NMD and 69 percent of youth in THP-Plus were employed. One year later in the midst of the pandemic, on June 30, 2020, these figures stand at 41 percent and 53 percent, respectively. Two in five youth in THP-NMD who graduated high school in the spring of 2020 did not enroll in post-secondary education in the fall due to COVID-19. By discharging youth from extended foster care during the COVID-19 pandemic, their odds of economic recovery are greatly lessened. County child welfare agencies should implement the provisions of the extension of extended foster care immediately and fully, as required by state law.

 **Utilize the \$5 million Housing Navigation Program allocation appropriated in the FY 2020-21 state budget to assist NMDs who are housing insecure.**

The FY 2019-20 state budget included \$5 million in one-time funding for the Housing Navigation Program, allocated to county child welfare agencies for the support of housing navigators to help young adults aged 18 to 21 secure and maintain housing, with priority given to young adults in the foster care system.<sup>55</sup> Due to state delays in administering the funding, it was not awarded to counties during FY 2019-20, and was again appropriated in the FY 2020-21 state budget. Once disbursed, county child welfare agencies should utilize the funding to assist NMDs who are experiencing housing insecurity or homelessness.

 **Implement the SB 1252 THP-Plus extension for youth in school in the manner in which its intended and required.**

Youth in THP-Plus programs in counties that have opted into the extension made available by SB 1252 can remain in the program for an additional 12 months and up to age 25 if they are enrolled in school. As of June 30, 2020, there were 27 counties offering the extension, accounting for 70 percent of the statewide THP-Plus housing capacity. These counties should ensure consistent application of the policy as intended. All County Information Notice I-40-15 indicates that if a county elects to implement this provision, it is applicable to all youth in the program and cannot be applied on a case-by-case basis.<sup>56</sup> Unfortunately, this guidance is not followed statewide, with some counties implementing additional requirements that screen out some youth enrolled in school from participating in the extension. Of youth who exited a THP-Plus program during FY 2019-20,

54 All County Letter 20-117 (2020). <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/Portals/9/Additional-Resources/Letters-and-Notices/ACLs/2020/20-117.pdf?ver=2020-10-23-143941-503>

55 Senate Bill 109 (Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review), Chapter 363 (2019).

56 All County Information Notice I-40-15 (2015). [https://www.cdss.ca.gov/lettersnotices/EntRes/getinfo/acin/2015/I-40\\_15.pdf](https://www.cdss.ca.gov/lettersnotices/EntRes/getinfo/acin/2015/I-40_15.pdf)


just six percent have earned a degree, certificate or license. Given the small number of youth who complete a post-secondary education milestone during their time in the program, the extension provides an important resource for youth pursuing post-secondary education and should be fully implemented by those counties that opt in.

 **Establish a formal partnership with a home visitation program for new expectant mothers, such as Nurse Family Partnership, and establish a county policy to refer all expectant foster youth.**


Together, parenting youth in THP-NMD and THP-Plus collectively had 657 children residing with them in the program as of June 30, 2020. However, during FY 2019-20, just over one in three (35%) youth in THP-NMD and less than half (47%) of the youth in THP-Plus were referred to a home visitation program such as Nurse Family Partnership during their pregnancy by the county child welfare agency or provider. Less than one in four (24%) youth in THP-NMD and THP-Plus received home visitation services. Home visitation is an evidence-based model, shown to have sizable, sustained effects on important child and maternal outcomes. While Nurse Family Partnership is not in every county, nearly all California counties have some form of evidence-based home visitation services for expectant mothers, including the CalWORKs Home Visitation Program established in 2018, the California Home Visiting Program operated by the Department of Public Health, and other local programs funded through First 5 California and Local Commissions.

Establishing stronger relationships at the local level between county child welfare, transitional housing providers and home visitation programs is an opportunity to improve outcomes for parenting foster youth and their children. Los Angeles County Department of Child and Family Services has a formal relationship with Nurse Family Partnership and has adopted a policy to refer any foster youth who becomes pregnant and intends on continuing

with the pregnancy to the program if they meet specified criteria. Nurse Family Partnership provides home visiting services, beginning during the pregnancy and extending through the child's first two years of life. Public Health Nurses who visit the youth's home focus on the new mother's health and on her development as a mother. In THP-NMD, nearly half (45%) of the children residing with a parent in THP-NMD and 22 percent in THP-Plus are under one years old. Over half of the children residing with a parent in THP-NMD (51%) and THP-Plus (57%) are between one and three years old. The vast majority of parenting youth in these programs could be receiving home visitation services.

 **Ensure probation officers with NMDs on their caseload have access to information about local housing resources for youth transitioning out of care.**

As of April 1, 2020, 15 percent of youth in THP-NMD were probation-supervised. This is slightly higher than the percentage of NMDs across all placements who are probation-supervised (12%). However, in THP-Plus just nine percent of youth who entered a program during FY 2019-20 were formerly supervised by the juvenile probation system, a figure that has decreased from 15 percent in FY 2012-13. County probation departments should ensure that their probation officers with NMDs on their caseload have information about local housing resources for youth transitioning out of care, including THP-Plus, housing vouchers, and programs available through the local homelessness response system.

 **Explore policies or pilot approaches to target specialized services or additional transition support for youth at higher risk of homelessness.**

The CalYOUTH Study found that certain factors put youth at higher risk of experiencing homelessness while in foster care between ages 17 and 21, including being a male, identifying as a sexual minority, and having ever been placed

in congregate care. Each of these populations are represented in THP-NMD and THP-Plus: Males make up 43 percent of youth in THP-NMD and 39 percent in THP-Plus. Youth who disclose identifying as LGBTQ make up 13 percent of youth in THP-NMD, and 14 percent in THP-Plus. Nearly one in four (23%) youth enter THP-NMD directly from congregate care. Counties and providers should consider how they can target youth with these risk factors for homelessness, providing them with specialized services or more robust transition support.

### **Engage in a relationship with the local homeless Continuum of Care.**

THP-Plus providers utilize a range of practices to assist youth who are transitioning out of their program and still in need of housing support, with three-quarters (75%) of providers reporting they refer youth to go through the local homeless Coordinated Entry System to see what services they may be eligible for. More than half (58%) of the THP-Plus programs are operated by organizations that are either members of their local Continuum of Care (CoC), or where a staff member attends CoC meetings regularly. This information is encouraging, and indicates that in several communities, THP-Plus providers act as a bridge between county child welfare and the local homelessness response system. In communities where this bridge does not exist, providers and county child welfare agencies should engage in a relationship with the local homeless Continuum of Care in order to ensure that youth who are assessed through the local Coordinated Entry System are first screened for extended foster care or THP-Plus eligibility, and so that youth who require continued support with housing upon leaving THP-NMD or THP-Plus are assisted with accessing the Coordinated Entry System or the local process through which to seek assistance.

### **THP-Plus providers should apply for funding through the California Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) program.**

One in three youth experienced homelessness between leaving foster care and entering a THP-Plus program. It is also evident that many youth are not eligible for THP-Plus but experience housing instability and homelessness. Some youth struggle at exit from THP-Plus and leave without stable housing in place. In the FY 2019-20 state budget, \$650 million of one-time funding was included to address homelessness in California, with at least eight percent (\$52 million) dedicated to addressing youth homelessness, allocated to the state's 44 local homeless Continuums of Care, 58 counties and 13 largest cities. In the FY 2020-21 state budget, a second round of HHAP was funded with \$300 million. THP-Plus providers should consider applying for this funding locally to broaden their target population and serve youth in their communities who may not have been in care at age 18.

### **THP-NMD providers should provide annual training for their staff on reproductive and sexual health of foster youth.**

Given that the number of female participants who are custodial mothers more than doubles during their time in the THP-NMD program (from 10% to 21%), the THP-NMD program is an opportunity to ensure youth are informed about healthy sexual development and reproductive and sexual health in a manner that is medically accurate, and to connect to information about current contraception methods. THP-NMD providers should provide annual training to their staff to equip them with the information and resources necessary to have these conversations and make appropriate referrals for in-depth information and services.

## PARTICIPANT PROFILE: Nicolas Castagnola, 22

Nicolas was 15 years old when he was removed from his mother and entered the foster care system. He lived with his aunt, uncle, and five other kids for three years. After turning 18, he moved back in with his mother, but unfortunately that was short-lived. “I was excited, but it only lasted a month or two before it soured. It wasn’t unexpected but it was a bummer.” Nicolas figured because he had exited the foster care system and moved home with his mother that he was on his own, but when he contacted his social worker, he was relieved to find out he was eligible for extended foster care.

Nicolas had reservations about moving into an apartment and enduring the challenges of independent living on his own, so he opted to participate in New Alternatives’ THP-NMD as his foster care placement. Now, at age 22, Nicolas is in New Alternatives’ THP-Plus program for former foster youth.

Nicolas’ transition from foster care to adulthood has not been one big success, rather a story of peaks and valleys. He started at New Alternatives while enrolled in a private university. Even with financial aid, the out-of-pocket costs were too high and emptied his savings the first semester. His grades suffered and he dropped out of school. His case manager, Candace helped him get back on track, now enrolled in Santiago Canyon College with plans to transfer and earn his bachelor’s degree in psychology.

Candace also supported Nicolas in getting his current job as a foster youth liaison at a group home. When the COVID-19 crisis hit, he found solace in his work. “It’s sort of like being a big brother. I hang out with the kids and include myself in what they’re doing. I’m in the part of life they are about to do. I can tell them the pitfalls to avoid.” In September 2020, Nicolas was named employee of the month. In addition to working with kids, Nicolas also has a dream of becoming a comedian, and after three years of exploring stand-up, has won a few competitions.



Nicolas—like all young adults—has also experienced some growing pains. He is in his second apartment while in the program. The first landlord threatened to evict him for a noise disturbance. New Alternatives swiftly found him a new apartment and supported him to relocate and stabilize. It’s this type of support that Nicolas believes to be the safety net, and the difference between being on your own and being in a program—“I don’t know what I would have done honestly, I would have tried to find a family member or live in a car.”

Nicolas emphasizes the importance of learned accountability—it’s not just going to school and getting a job, but it’s the countless small things, the “adulting” you have to learn somewhere: getting a physical, teeth cleaning, checking your credit score, connecting to insurance, changing your address, filing taxes, balancing a budget, filling out job applications and school financial aid. “It can be overwhelming to navigate all these systems alone. My case manager is an excellent source of information and support.” With financial support and budgeting guidance, Nicolas learned how to make \$60 dollars stretch by incorporating fresh and frozen foods. His favorite meal to cook is steak with caramelized onions.

*New Alternatives is located in Orange and San Diego counties.*

## APPENDIX A: REPORTED THP-PLUS RATES BY COUNTY

County	Reported THP-Plus Rate Per Youth Per Month (Single Site)
Alameda	\$ 2,580
Contra Costa	\$ 2,450
Los Angeles	\$ 2,200
Monterey	\$ 2,970
Orange	\$ 4,005
Sacramento	\$ 2,981
San Diego	\$ 2,816
San Francisco	\$ 2,540
San Luis Obispo	\$ 3,639
San Mateo	\$ 2,882

County	Reported THP-Plus Rate Per Youth Per Month (Scattered Site)
Alameda	\$ 2,500
Butte	\$ 1,879
Contra Costa	\$ 2,659
Del Norte	\$ 3,130
El Dorado	\$ 2,688
Fresno	\$ 2,616
Glenn	\$ 3,580
Humboldt	\$ 3,297
Imperial	\$ 2,879
Inyo	\$ 2,200
Kern	\$ 1,538
Kings	\$ 2,374
Lassen	\$ 2,847
Los Angeles	\$ 2,200
Madera	\$ 2,500
Marin	\$ 4,131
Mariposa	\$ 1,550
Mendocino	\$ 2,800
Merced	\$ 2,187
Napa	\$ 3,841
Nevada	\$ 1,562
Orange	\$ 3,090
Placer	\$ 2,725
Plumas	\$ 2,434

Riverside	\$ 2,200
Sacramento	\$ 2,981
San Bernardino	\$ 2,716
San Diego	\$ 2,816
San Francisco	\$ 2,594
San Joaquin	\$ 2,491
San Mateo	\$ 3,146
Santa Barbara	\$ 2,679
Santa Clara	\$ 2,400
Santa Cruz	\$ 3,028
Solano	\$ 3,477
Sonoma	\$ 2,686
Stanislaus	\$ 2,100
Sutter	\$ 2,500
Tehama	\$ 3,070
Trinity	\$ 3,202
Tulare	\$ 2,173
Tuolumne	\$ 1,819
Yolo	\$ 1,375
Yuba	\$ 2,948

County	Reported THP-Plus Rate Per Youth Per Month (Host Family)
Alameda	\$ 1,665
Inyo	\$ 2,200
Merced	\$ 2,187
Monterey	\$ 2,970
Riverside	\$ 2,200
San Francisco	\$ 2,022
San Mateo	\$ 3,146
Stanislaus	\$ 2,100
Ventura	\$ 500

## APPENDIX B: WAITING LIST SIZE FOR THP-NMD AND THP-PLUS BY COUNTY AS OF JUNE 30, 2020

County	THP-NMD Number of Youth on Waiting List as of 6/30/20	THP-Plus Number of Youth on Waiting List as of 6/30/20
Alameda	64	40
Alpine	NP	NP
Amador	0	NP
Butte	1	23
Calaveras	NP	NP
Colusa	NP	NP
Contra Costa	4	65
Del Norte	2	NL
El Dorado	0	3
Fresno	10	30
Glenn	NP	0
Humboldt	4	7
Imperial	NP	2
Inyo	NP	0
Kern	0	89
Kings	0	1
Lake	0	NP
Lassen	1	NL
Los Angeles	216	75
Madera	NP	0
Marin	NL	3
Mariposa	NP	0
Mendocino	0	0
Merced	7	0
Modoc	NP	NP
Mono	NP	NP
Monterey	0	0
Napa	0	0
Nevada	2	5
Orange	5	0
Placer	1	13
Plumas	0	NL
Riverside	21	14
Sacramento	33	0

San Benito	NP	NP
San Bernardino	43	10
San Diego	17	43
San Francisco	14	34
San Joaquin	1	20
San Luis Obispo	0	0
San Mateo	1	14
Santa Barbara	0	0
Santa Clara	10	2
Santa Cruz	0	22
Shasta	1	NP
Sierra	NP	NP
Siskiyou	1	NP
Solano	15	0
Sonoma	NL	10
Stanislaus	5	0
Sutter	1	NL
Tehama	0	12
Trinity	NP	NL
Tulare	0	2
Tuolumne	0	0
Ventura	4	0
Yolo	5	NL
Yuba	1	NL

NP = No program

NL = No list; no providers maintain a list

# THP-NMD & THP-PLUS HISTORY

<b>2001</b>	AB 427 establishes THP-Plus. THP-Plus is de-linked from STEP.
<b>2002</b>	THP-Plus is de-linked from STEP.
<b>2003</b>	3 counties implement THP-Plus.
<b>2004</b>	THP-Plus changed to an annual allocation.
<b>2005</b>	Eligibility extended to age 24, and 5 counties implement THP-Plus.
<b>2006</b>	60% county share of cost removed, and 16 counties implement THP-Plus.
<b>2007</b>	39 counties implement THP-Plus.
<b>2008</b>	THP-Plus Participant Tracking System is launched.
<b>2009</b>	50 counties implement THP-Plus, and it serves over 2,000 youth for the first time ever during FY 2008-09. \$5 million budget reduction to THP-Plus for FY 2009-10.
<b>2010</b>	THP-Plus budget reduced slightly to \$34.9 million for FY 2010-11.
<b>2011</b>	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.
<b>2012</b>	Extended Foster Care is implemented. THP+FC licensing and rate structure is established. THP-Plus is still over 2,000 youth annually in 50 counties.
<b>2013</b>	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.

<b>2014</b>	THP+FC continues to grow with 1,031 youth in the program as of 7/1/14, while THP-Plus is on the decline. SB 1252 passes, allowing youth enrolled in school to participate in THP-Plus for 36 months and up to age 25, at counties' option.
<b>2015</b>	THP+FC serves over 2,400 youth during 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.
<b>2016</b>	19 counties implement the THP-Plus extension established by SB 1252. THP+FC serves over 3,000 youth during FY 2015-16, while the number of youth served by THP-Plus remains stagnant.
<b>2017</b>	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.
<b>2018</b>	27 counties implement the THP-Plus extension. The moment-in-time number of youth placed in THP+FC reaches 1,916 as of July 1, 2018. THP+FC undergoes a statutory name change to "THP-NMD" as of January 1, 2018.
<b>2019</b>	2,023 youth are placed in THP-NMD as of July 1, 2019, and the FY 2018-19 THP-Plus housing capacity is 1,252 statewide. \$8 million is made available in the 2019-20 state budget, intended to fund the THP-Plus program.
<b>2020</b>	2,032 youth are placed in THP-NMD as of April 1, 2020, and the FY 2019-20 THP-Plus housing capacity is 1,270. \$4 million is included in the state budget to fund a THP-NMD Housing Supplement.



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