

Youth in THP-NMD and THP-Plus

A 2020-21 CENSUS

JBAY

JOHN BURTON
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for Youth

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Introduction



California is a land of contrasts, and its treatment of current and former foster youth is no exception. As a state, we are fortunate to have two well-established, effective programs that provide safe, affordable housing and supportive services to over 3,200 current and former foster youth annually: Transitional Housing Placement for Non-Minor Dependents (THP-NMD) and the Transitional Housing Program-Plus (THP-Plus). Yet, the challenges faced by current and former foster youth in California are significant. They face an escalating housing crisis, an economy that demands highly skilled workers and a higher education system where young people without guidance can easily be derailed. In 2020, the pandemic brought new challenges, particularly for foster youth, who were often without the economic and emotional support of an extended family.

Despite these challenges, young people in THP-NMD and THP-Plus persevered. The current report provides a snapshot of the 3,200 young people who participated in these two important programs during 2020-21. The report begins with a summary of who participated in both programs and is followed by how young people

fared in the areas of education, employment, housing and homelessness, health and justice system involvement. Each section includes a short discussion of the topic, followed by key summary statistics. For additional information about the THP-Plus program, including program rates, waiting list information, and other special topics, please refer to the JBAY's November 2021 publication, [*2020-21 Statewide Analysis of Supportive Housing for Current and Former Foster Youth in California*](#).

As the current report documents, young people in both programs struggled in 2020-21. They faced housing instability, poverty and underemployment. As you will also read, they continued to work for a better life, enrolling in school, seeking employment and parenting their young children, under the most challenging circumstances imaginable. We invite you to review the findings of the report and join JBAY in its ongoing commitment improve the quality of life for youth in California who have been in foster care or homeless by advocating for better laws, training communities to strengthen local practices and conducting research to inform policy solutions.

Background

TRANSITIONAL HOUSING PLACEMENT FOR NON-MINOR DEPENDENTS (THP-NMD)

The Transitional Housing Placement for Non-minor Dependents (THP-NMD) is in its ninth year of implementation. 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 2012.¹ 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.

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 25.²



1 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.

2 Senate Bill 1252 (Torres), Chapter 774 (2014).

Program Participation

Together, THP-NMD and THP-Plus were serving 3,294 young people as of June 30, 2021. The average age of youth in THP-NMD was over three years younger than the average age of a THP-Plus participant, reflecting the fact that most foster youth in California elect to remain in extended foster care and subsequently participate in THP-Plus after its completion, at age 21. The percentage of youth who were custodial parents in THP-Plus was roughly double that of THP-NMD, reflecting the older average age of the participant.

Collectively, there were 807 children living with parents who are participants of either program, 444 in THP-NMD and 363 in THP-Plus, with the larger number of children in THP-NMD due to the greater number of participants. The average duration of the program was longer in THP-Plus,

18 months on average versus 14 months for THP-NMD.

Youth in both programs were similar demographically, but not identical. Both programs had a greater percentage of youth who are female, particularly THP-Plus. For both programs, the most prevalent race category was Other/Mixed/Unknown, followed by Black or African American, White, Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native, and Pacific Islander or Native Hawaiian. The percentage of youth who entered THP-NMD from the juvenile probation system was double the percentage for THP-Plus. Lastly, slightly more youth in THP-NMD identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer or questioning (LBGTQ) than in THP-Plus.



Education

For both programs, the majority of youth were not enrolled in school as of June 30, 2021, with youth in THP-NMD enrolled in school at a lower rate than THP-Plus. Youth in THP-NMD were twice as likely to be enrolled in high school, which reflects the younger age of the program participants. Of those who were enrolled in school, the most common form of enrollment was community college. Enrollment in a four-year college or university was less frequent than community college in both programs, with youth in THP-Plus twice as likely to be enrolled in a four-year college or university.

As of June 30, 2021, the highest level of education completed among the majority

of youth was high school or a GED in both programs. In THP-Plus, a combined total of 11% of youth had earned an Associates degree, Bachelor’s degree or a vocational certificate or license. It is notable that a sizable percentage of youth in both programs had not earned a high school diploma, 15% in THP-NMD and 11% in THP-Plus.

Participants in both programs who were enrolled post-secondary education were receiving the main forms of financial aid, the Chafee Education and Training Voucher (ETV), the Pell Grant and the Cal Grant. The Chafee ETV was the most commonly received form of financial aid for young people in both programs, followed by the Pell Grant and the Cal Grant.

| TABLE 2 | THP-NMD | THP-PLUS |
|--|----------------|-----------------|
| What was their current educational status? | | |
| > Attending HS, GED or equivalency program | 10% | 5% |
| > Attending 2-year/community college | 24% | 30% |
| > Attending 4-year college/university | 3% | 7% |
| > Not currently attending school | 63% | 58% |
| What was their highest educational level completed? (c) | | |
| > Some high school | 15% | 11% |
| > High school diploma or GED | 83% | 78% |
| > Associate degree | 1% | 4% |
| > Bachelor’s degree | 0% | 3% |
| > Vocational certificate or license | 1% | 4% |
| What percentage of youth enrolled in Post-Secondary Education received the following? (c) | | |
| > Chafee ETV | 57% | 61% |
| > Pell Grant | 50% | 49% |
| > Cal Grant | 36% | 30% |

Employment and Earnings

As of June 30, 2021, most youth in both programs were working, with youth in THP-Plus more likely to work full-time than youth in THP-NMD. A sizable percentage of youth in both programs were seeking employment as of June 30, 2021 while a slightly larger percentage of youth in THP-NMD were not employed and not seeking employment than in THP-Plus.

The hourly wage of youth in THP-NMD was lower than the wage in THP-Plus, likely reflecting their younger age and lower levels of work experience. Correspondingly, the average monthly income of participants in THP-NMD was lower than that of youth in THP-Plus. Both groups experienced an increase in their average monthly income from entrance to exit, with youth in THP-NMD experiencing a slightly higher increase.



Receipt of public benefits was more prevalent among youth participants in THP-Plus than in THP-NMD. Commonly received benefits received include Supplemental Security Income, CalFresh and CalWorks. Most young people in both programs had a checking or saving account.

| TABLE 3 | THP-NMD | THP-PLUS |
|--|----------------|-----------------|
| What was their current employment status? (c) | | |
| > Employed full time (35+ hours per week) | 24% | 36% |
| > Employed part time (less than 35 hours per week) | 33% | 29% |
| > Seeking employment | 30% | 25% |
| > Not employed and not seeking employment | 13% | 10% |
| For employed youth, what was their average hourly wage? (c) | \$14.95 | \$16.59 |
| For employed youth, what was their average monthly income? (c) | \$1,370.73 | \$1,814.27 |
| What was the percentage increase in monthly income from entrance to exit? (b) | 38% | 31% |
| What percent received at least one form of public benefit? (b) | 13% | 33% |
| What percent had a checking or savings account? (b) | 91% | 93% |

Housing and Homelessness

Youth in THP-NMD and THP-Plus faced challenges related to housing. Both groups included individuals who had experienced homelessness immediately prior to entering the programs. Young people in THP-Plus were more likely to have experienced homelessness prior to entering the program, which reflects the fact that they were no longer in foster care. Both



groups were also likely to have experienced at least one episode of homelessness between foster care and entrance to either THP-NMD or THP-Plus, with a full 40% of youth in THP-Plus and 20% of youth in THP-NMD reporting this experience.

Most youth participating in both programs report that they are exiting the program to stable housing. For youth exiting THP-NMD, common options included other foster care placements such as a Supervised Independent Living Placement or another THP-NMD program, while for youth exiting THP-Plus, common options included living with a relative, renting an apartment, moving into shared housing or moving into a college dorm.

For youth paying rent on exit, the average rent paid by a youth exiting THP-NMD was slightly less than the amount paid by a youth exiting THP-Plus. Rate of involuntary exits were much higher for youth exiting THP-NMD, 36% versus 16% for THP-Plus.

| TABLE 4 | THP-NMD | THP-PLUS |
|--|----------------|-----------------|
| What percent of youth were homeless immediately prior to entering the program? (a) | 7% | 18% |
| What percent experienced homelessness at some time between foster care and program entrance? (b) | 20% | 40% |
| What percent exited the program to stable housing? (b) | 95% | 92% |
| What percent exited the program to homelessness? (b) | 5% | 8% |
| What was the average rent paid upon program exit? (b) | \$664.49 | \$711.94 |
| What percentage of exits to the program were involuntary? (b) | 36% | 16% |

Health and Justice System Involvement

The Participant Tracking System collects limited information about the health and justice system involvement among youth in both programs. Almost all youth in both programs have health insurance, which is provided to former foster youth until age 26. A similar percentage of youth in both programs were receiving services for mental, physical, learning or developmental disabilities at exit from the program, approximately one-quarter of the youth who were participating in both programs during the fiscal year.

Involvement with the criminal justice system was rare but not non-existent. A greater percentage of youth in THP-Plus have been incarcerated or detained in the adult criminal justice system since entering the program than the percentage in THP-NMD. Similarly small numbers had an adult conviction since entering either program.

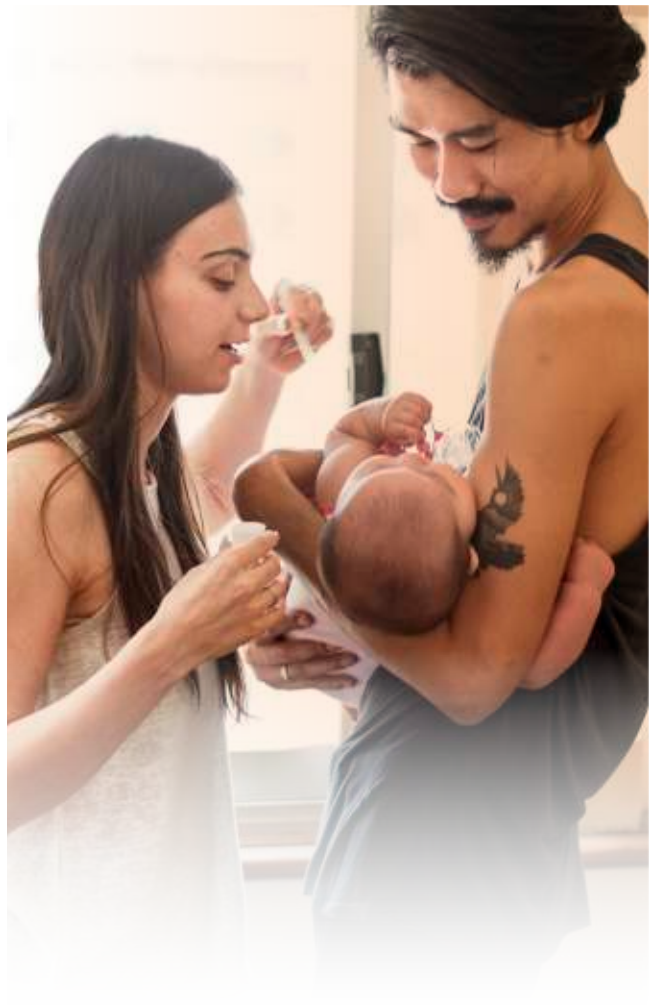


| TABLE 4 | THP-NMD | THP-PLUS |
|---|---------|----------|
| What percent had health insurance? (b) | 100% | 98% |
| What percent were receiving services for mental, physical, learning or developmental disabilities at exit from the program? (b) | 25% | 23% |
| What percent had been incarcerated or detained in adult criminal justice system since entering THP-Plus? (b) | 4% | 10% |
| What percent had an adult conviction since entering THP-Plus? (c) | 2% | 3% |

REPORT METHODOLOGY

Information for the current report was drawn from the THP-NMD and THP-Plus Participant Tracking Systems, 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.

These reports included 957 THP-NMD participants and 605 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 2020-21. These reports included 591 THP-NMD participants and 388 THP-Plus participants. Data on 42% of THP-NMD participants and 60% of THP-Plus participants statewide are captured in the respective Participant Tracking Systems.





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