

BECOMING A THP-PLUS PROVIDER

The THP-Plus program for former foster and probation youth is administered by county social services agencies who certify and contract with nonprofit THP-Plus providers, or in some cases provide the program directly. To provide services and access THP-Plus funds, THP-Plus providers must be certified by the county on an annual basis. This is an entirely different process than state foster care licensing, and following 2011 Realignment, counties and providers are no longer required to submit THP-Plus plans to the state.

CERTIFICATION PROCESS

Counties can certify providers in one of two ways:

1) Request for Proposal (RFP)

Certification: If the county issues an RFP, the issuing county can request enough information from each potential provider to fulfill the THP-Plus certification requirements. This process allows counties to select providers and certify them simultaneously.

2) Independent Certification: In counties that do not select providers competitively through an RFP, providers must submit documentation to the county social services agency that demonstrates compliance with THP-Plus regulations.

Counties certify providers based on documentation of provider policies and procedures that demonstrate compliance with the California Department of Social Services' regulations governing THP-Plus ([Social Services Standards Manual, Chapter 30-900](#)). Section 30-920 outlines certification requirements.

It is recommended that, if conducted outside of the an RFP, the certification process consist of two parts:

1. Written Documentation of Certification Requirements
2. Site Visit Verification

Guidance for both parts of this process is provided on pages 2-3.

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1. Written Documentation of Certification Requirements

The first step in the certification is for the provider to document its compliance with each of the certification requirements of THP-Plus. In some counties, this has included developing a “certification binder” which consists of a table of contents listing the certification requirements followed by individual tabs. Behind each of these tabs, the THP-Plus provider places the section of its Policies and Procedures that pertain to the individual certification requirement.

For example, certification for THP-Plus requires that providers have a non-discrimination policy. This requirement reads as follows:

Non-discrimination

The program will not discriminate based on race, gender, sexual orientation, or disability, and youth receiving psychotropic medications will not be automatically excluded.

To document its compliance with this certification requirement, the provider would include in the section of the certification binder its policies and procedures that state it is non-discriminatory, as required above. For this reason, it is critical that the THP-Plus program being certified has fully developed its program's policies and procedures, and refers to the certification requirements to ensure all elements are addressed by their program.

2. Site Visit Verification

In addition to reviewing written documentation of the THP-Plus provider's compliance with the certification requirements, it is advisable for the county social service agency to conduct site visits to verify that those written requirements are the practice of the THP-Plus provider, and not simply the written policy. It is recommended that the site visit is conducted by the THP-Plus contact person in the county social services agency who is most informed about the requirements of the program and the goals it aims to achieve.

Provided on the next page are five activities to be conducted at certification site visits. The site visits may occur in multiple stages, or may be scheduled for a single visit.

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1. Review of Certification Requirements with THP-Plus Provider

- Purpose: THP-Plus contact person for the social service agency reviews each of the certification requirements with representatives from the THP-Plus program and hears directly from them about how they are implemented. Program forms are reviewed as to learn how the certification requirements are made operational within the program.
- Frequency: Annually, usually upon renewal of the THP-Plus contact. In the case of a multi-year contract, an interim certification review should be conducted.

2. Rental Unit Inspection

- Purpose: Periodically inspecting individual units will ensure that rental units meet safety standards and are located in neighborhoods in which youth feel safe, with community amenities, such as access to public transportation and retail.
- Frequency: Rental unit inspection is conducted on an annual basis for 25% of leased units selected on a random basis with 24 hours prior notification.

3. Client Satisfaction Survey

- Purpose: This gauges the level of satisfaction of youth participating in THP-Plus and is an important complement to quantitative measures being collected. Questions regarding specific certification requirements can be included in the client satisfaction survey to verify that providers are meeting the requirements.
- Frequency: At least annually.

4. Youth Focus Groups

- Purpose: Focus groups provide a valuable opportunity to hear directly from youth about their program experiences, both positive and negative. To encourage candor, program staff members should not be present for the focus group. The focus group should include a diverse set of youth representing various perspectives and be led by an experienced youth facilitator.
- Frequency: At least annually.

Following the completion of the review of the written documentation of certification requirements and the site visit verification, the county social services agency should issue a letter of certification that states that the provider is certified by the county to operate as an authorized THP-Plus provider.