

A Review of Emancipation Services

Los Angeles County
Economy and Efficiency Commission

February 2002

**The Los Angeles County
Citizens' Economy and Efficiency
Commission**

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The purpose of the Commission is to examine any function of county government at the request of the Board of Supervisors, on its own initiative, or as suggested by others and adopted, and to submit recommendations to the Board which will improve local government economy and efficiency, and effectiveness.

**CITIZENS'
ECONOMY
EFFICIENCY
COMMISSION**
LOS ANGELES COUNTY
1964-2002

February 7, 2002

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Honorable Zev Yaroslavsky
Chair of the Board of Supervisors
Room 821, Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Chairman Yaroslavsky:

As your Board is aware, the Emancipation Services/Independent Living Program has had a number of difficulties over its history. In the spring of last year the Economy and Efficiency Commission initiated a review of this program. Funded by a grant from the Productivity Investment Fund and by the Department of Children and Family Services and the Probation Department, an array of issues was reviewed. In the course of this review many of the identified concepts and recommendations were communicated to program management and consequently incorporated into their approach. Subsequent to these efforts, the Board directed the Chief Administrative Officer to study the program and make recommendations. This study resulted in the creation of an Interim Management Team to assist with and restructure the program. The Commission desires to be part of this process and support the efforts of the County and the Chief Administrative Office.

The accompanying review makes several recommendations that have been developed within the context of the current environment. These recommendations address both program management and operations and are intended to assist the County and departments in fulfilling their responsibilities to the residents of Los Angeles County.

As always, the Commission remains available to contribute in anyway possible and looks forward to working with the Board, the Chief Administrative Office and departments in advancing the cause of this program.

Sincerely,

Robert H, Philibosian
Chairman



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1. Transitional Housing

A REVIEW OF EMANCIPATION SERVICES

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Economy and Efficiency Commission independently began a review of the emancipation services provided by the County last spring. Subsequently, the Board of Supervisors recognized the importance of the County's efforts to support emancipating youth and initiated a number of actions to improve those services. Most recently, the County has created an interim management team within the Chief Administrative Office (CAO) to study and revise the operations of the program. We have attempted to contribute to these continuing efforts and hope that this high-level review of our observations and recommendations will add value to the ongoing development of this important program.

Summary of Recommendations

1. Direct the CAO, in coordination with the impacted departments, to include in his quarterly reports, the "Total Eligible" population versus the "Total Served" population relative to the ES/ILP Program.
2. Emancipation services should be provided by line caseworkers in a decentralized fashion, rather than by a centralized, specialized service group.
3. Ensure that line caseworkers have appropriate training and information to provide emancipation services; to that end, develop a brochure for caseworkers, emancipating youth, and their caretakers that lists available resources and departmental or agency contacts.
4. Revise the organizational structure of the program to insure that the functional needs of both service delivery and program administration are included.
5. That the Board of Supervisors, with input from the team leader and the Interim Management Team established by the CAO, establish Department Head Performance Agreement Objectives for each department head involved in the Emancipation Services/Independent Living Program (ES/ILP).
6. Improve the information systems infrastructure and data handling capabilities, enabling DCFS workers to obtain data on any client from any place in the County. To the extent possible, adopt a "standard model" approach, using a matrix design to document the services or benefits appropriate for each age grouping as the basis for developing a customized Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP).
7. Direct the Chief Information Officer to assign a staff member to the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) as a temporary departmental Co-CIO, tasked to assist DCFS in bringing department-wide IT infrastructure up to modern standards and to assist the Emancipation Services Group in designing appropriate support systems.
8. Double the amount of shelter, transitional and permanent housing for pre-emancipated and emancipated foster youth over the next 3 years to bring the total to at least 1100 beds, approximately 50% of the anticipated need.

9. A continuum of housing resources should be established for emancipated foster youth, runaway and homeless youth, and transition age young adults in each Service Planning Area (SPA) in relative proportion to the number of youth in out-of-home care in that SPA. This continuum includes shelters, scattered site apartments, apartment buildings, and congregate living facilities with a range of supervision levels and associated support services.
10. An operational database of all available housing for pre-emancipated and emancipated youth should be built that can instantaneously and continuously show what housing vacancies are available, where, and at what cost.
11. Full-time “apartment or housing locators” should be hired to find, secure, and maintain safe apartments for emancipated foster youth in SPAs of high need.
12. Provide funds for foster parents, foster family agencies, and group homes to continue to house and provide services to youth who turn 18, for a reasonable transition period (e.g., 6 months to 1 year), until permanent housing can be obtained.
13. Ensure that Los Angeles County’s total current allotment of THP and THPP housing slots, ILP Room and Board Assistance funds, and HUD Section 8 vouchers are fully utilized
14. Use some ILP (Chafee Act) revenue to supplement Section 8 vouchers to secure apartments/housing in higher rent SPAs and sub-SPA areas.
15. Direct the Auditor-Controller, in coordination with the Economy and Efficiency Commission, to review recommendations of the Commission and the actions taken by County and report his findings to the Board within 6 to 12 months.

II. INTRODUCTION

The problems of emancipated youth have been extensively documented. Studies and experience have demonstrated that these youth encounter great difficulties upon their departure from the foster care system, suffering higher rates of unemployment and lower educational attainment than youth within the general population. Moreover, indications are that emancipated foster youth experience disproportionately high rates of homelessness (40%-60%), incarceration, dependence on public assistance, non-marital childbirth (60% of young women have children within four years of being emancipated), substance abuse, and other high-risk behaviors.

According to the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), close to 13,000 youth are eligible for emancipation services, with approximately 8,384 receiving services. The total eligible population within the Probation Department is approximately 4,352. Unfortunately, the Probation Department does not have the capability at this time to determine how many within this population receive emancipation services. Table 1 presents further detail associated with these numbers.

Table 1

Emancipated Youth Population						
Client Age Group	DCFS		Probation		Total	
	Eligible	Served*	Eligible	Served	Eligible	Served
14-15	4,646		867	Unknown	5,513	---
16-18	5,330		2,057	Unknown	7,387	---
18-21	3,000	▼	1,428	Unknown	4,428	
Totals	12,976	8,384	4,352	Unknown	17,328	8,384 (+)

*DCFS does not have the capability, at this time, to break down the numbers in each of these age groups.

NOTE: Statistics for DCFS and Probation were taken from Independent Living Program (ILP) Strategic Review, Probation Department, August 2001.

Statistics for DCFS clients served provided by Emancipation Services Division.

It is important for the County to be made aware of how services are being delivered and to whom. To accomplish this it is clear that the County will have to develop a metric that will identify those items and present it in a manner that will enable an effective allocation of resources.

The total Independent Living Program allocation budget for FY 2001-02 is \$19.7 million. This amount includes the Basic Planning Allocation of \$18.2 million, of which a maximum expenditure of 30 percent may be used for housing, plus a \$1.5 million allocation for the Emancipated Youth Stipends program. Of the \$19.7 million allocated, DCFS estimates that \$9.4 has been spent through the end of the second quarter claiming period. In addition to the allocated funding, millions are currently being spent to support transitioning age youth. The Interim Management Team is in the process of developing a multi-year (5 year) budget-planning document that will identify all the funding sources available to this population (e.g., HUD grants of approximately \$3.5 million and other housing funds available through the Community Development Commission (CDC)). In addition, the Interim Management Team will work to identify other potential funding streams that may be available to serve this population.

Recommendation

1. Direct the CAO, in coordination with the impacted departments, to include in his quarterly reports, the “Total Eligible” population versus the “Total Served” population relative to the ES/ILP Program.

III. EFFORTS TO DATE

During the course of the Commission’s review of emancipation services, the Board of Supervisors has recognized the special needs of this population. The Board subsequently instructed the Chief Administrative Office (CAO) to assist the department by providing additional oversight and direction to the program. The objective of this assistance is to encourage united, collaborative and cohesive action across the multiple departments and agencies involved in order to produce more effective outcomes. This and other actions, both at the County and departmental levels, have been taken in conjunction with the ongoing efforts of

the Economy and Efficiency Commission. As a result, many of the recommendations anticipated by the Commission have already been discussed and implemented prior to the issuance of this report. Within this dynamic environment the Commission hopes to contribute to the overall county effort by proposing additional recommendations in several critical areas.

IV. THE PROGRAM

Initial review of the program's structure reaffirmed that the problems that had been identified in several previous reviews continued to exist. Important among these difficulties were:

- The numerous functions that are necessary for the efficient organization and operation of the program were scattered among separate organizations of the department or were not directly available to support the program.
- Turnover within the management of the program was unacceptably high.
- Staff was inadequately trained to effectively provide services.
- Information systems infrastructure and data systems capabilities to operate the program were lacking.
- Programs that are designed to provide services have not been adequately reviewed or monitored.

The emphasis of the program's organizational structure has been placed upon establishing and operating programs to respond to the identified needs of the youth. Yet little attention has been placed on developing a strategic approach that outlines how these programs work together and how each program is organized to provide these services. Focusing just on the service delivery requirements of the pre-emancipation (14 to 17 year old) population and the emancipation (18-21 year old) population is not enough. The client management component - including data collection, client monitoring, outcome measurement and program coordination -has, by and large, been neglected. The failure to consider these managerial requirements predisposes any reforms to failure.

Thus, just as the service delivery structure requires revision, so too the managerial structure requires revision to insure that it includes effective program management - strategic planning, resource development, training and coordination, and solid program administration that encompasses information systems design and management, contract management and fiscal analysis.

The above actions, in combination with the efforts of the CAO and the departments to move from a centralized service model to a decentralized service model (one in which the line social workers become familiar with, and responsible for, both delivering the majority of the emancipation services and referring clients to centralized program resources like alumni service centers.), begin to develop an organizational structure that can effectively respond to the needs of

the emancipated population. Having such a decentralized structure will require an increased attention to staff training and to providing current program information.

Recommendations

2. Emancipation services should be provided by line caseworkers in a decentralized fashion, rather than by a centralized, specialized service group.
3. Ensure that line caseworkers have appropriate training and information to provide emancipation services; to that end, develop a brochure for caseworkers, emancipating youth, and their caretakers that lists available resources and departmental or agency contacts.
4. Revise the organizational structure of the program to insure that the functional needs of both service delivery and program administration are included.
5. That the Board of Supervisors, with input from the team leader and the Interim Management Team established by the CAO, establish Department Head Performance Agreement Objectives for each department head involved in the Emancipation Services/Independent Living Program (ES/ILP).

V. TECHNOLOGY

The primary challenge to the organization(s) providing service to emancipated youth is to ensure that services are being delivered in an efficient and effective manner to the client, while ensuring that the objectives of the programs are being accomplished. Managing such a task requires the availability of data and systems and the ability to develop and organize information so that it can be presented in a useable form. Neither the data, nor the systems, are available within the current organizational program structure.

Problem

In considering the scope of the information systems dilemma, it is important to remember two key structural factors remain outside the control of management. First, the County is obligated to use the statewide Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS) system. This system is designed to comply with federal mandates for collecting data in a consistent manner across all states. The CWS/CMS system has a number of serious flaws. Notable among those is that it covers only children under 18. Once a youth turns 18, he or she is no longer covered by the system. The County has yet to develop effective methods for collecting and analyzing this data on those emancipated youth who are a primary target for the services offered by the County.

In addition, the CWS/CMS system does not include provisions for the Transitional Independent Living Plans (TILP) that are designed to be the controlling document and driver for the delivery of services to emancipating youth. These TILPs should define and monitor the services deemed

appropriate for an individual youth, yet they are entirely disconnected from the County's other data systems.

Secondly, according to the Emancipation Oversight Committee's 1999 report, the long delay in developing the CWS/CMS forced DCFS to adopt a "patchwork" approach to tracking information. That led to an inability to integrate data with CWS/CMS.¹ Moreover, because CWS/CMS is a statewide system, Los Angeles County cannot make changes to the system independently. In its 1998 Management Audit, PriceWaterhouseCoopers noted the CWS/CMS has "overly rigid logic needs". Yet, for all its flaws, CWS/CMS remains the "system of record" for the federal and state governments. So it becomes critically important for county personnel to enter data as completely as possible, even if that data is not easily accessible by any other system.

These structural barriers present serious obstacles to the construction of an effective data management system. Nevertheless, Los Angeles County cannot wait for the state to reform the CWS/CMS or for the creation of a statewide ILP database before it embarks upon efforts to revise its own system for effective data management. Nor can DCFS allow the inherent difficulties in tracking post-emancipation youth prevent the County from developing adequate data management procedures

Over and above the problems in designing systems to capture and manage information, the Commission observed that the Department has a crippling problem with its information technology infrastructure – the networks, desktop PC's, and office productivity tools that enable the use of whatever information systems are ultimately designed. The Department's infrastructure is outdated, and apparently so haphazardly constructed, that even if superior databases and programs were in production, caseworkers would generally be unable to take advantage of them.

More seriously, the Commission observed a remarkably sharp contrast between DCFS and the Probation Department. Both Departments are similarly constrained by limited county resources, yet the Probation Department appears to have a well-designed and systematically distributed desktop environment. All Probation Officers have access to productivity tools like e-mail and access to shared databases, and the department-wide system offers appropriate functionality to line officers, supervisors, or more senior managers. Information on a particular client is available countywide, with appropriate security in place.

Thus, Probation Officers are well equipped to take advantage of centralized information and able to follow the case of their clients anywhere in the County. In contrast, DCFS caseworkers are often dependent on paper records that are manually compiled. Workers in one region have no way to know what actions have been taken by caseworkers in another region.

The Department of Children and Family Services urgently needs assistance in modernizing and streamlining its information technology infrastructure. This is an absolutely necessary prerequisite to succeeding in any other area covered by this report. As a result of this identified

¹ Walter Furman and Gloria Waldinger, Progress for Youth Aging out of Foster Care, Program Development, 1994-1999, August 24, 1999, p.24-5.

need, it would be highly beneficial for both the department and the County to have the Chief Information Officer (CIO) become actively involved in this process. This can be accomplished by assigning a CIO staff member to assist by serving in a departmental CIO capacity reporting to the head of the department. This person would be tasked with the responsibility to help DCFS bring the Department-wide infrastructure up to modern standards and to assist the Emancipation Services group in designing appropriate support systems.

Vision for Information Management System

The Department's current service delivery model attempts to identify the life skills demands that these emerging adults will face and to develop programs to help them meet those challenges. This model uses the state mandated Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP) as a framework within which the youth and caseworker can select the resources needed for the youth to succeed as an adult. This approach requires that the caseworker consult with the youth being served. But, as has been reported by DCFS, staff overloads and lack of training in this area of case management has meant that many plans have not been prepared, let alone monitored as to their implementation or successful outcome.

The current planning and service delivery model lacks a coherent codification of benefits and costs of the services available to each youth. The existing model does not help monitor program effectiveness or assess the equitable distribution of program benefits. As a result of this essentially manual system, the effective delivery of this program is left to the attentiveness and the alertness of an overworked staff with little or no oversight.

A new information system might begin by defining a baseline of services which meet a fundamental set of needs of individuals within particular groups, most likely an age grouping. From this standard base the caseworker can use his/her skills in personalizing the TILP to insure that it responds to the specific needs of the individual. This approach helps guarantee that each individual has a plan by making the standard model the default. This approach speeds in the development of a TILP that can be readily evaluated and improves manager's ability to ensure quality, completeness and accountability within the overall process.

Conceptually one might think of this approach as a matrix with the clients listed on the vertical and the services to be offered on the horizontal. Each client has a set of programs, which are pre-designated as being appropriate to his/her age group (or other grouping applicable to that client's particular situation). Modifications can then be made by adding or deleting services from the "standard" model. This client-centered conceptual approach provides a resource allocation methodology that is defined, coherently organized, useful in resource allocation and designed to facilitate revisions that accommodate the needs of the individual. This "standard" model serves as a framework within which the transitional independent living plan can be developed². For example, a model plan for a 16 year old would outline the benefits typically offered to someone of this age. It would also identify an expected monetary allowance for each benefit that would, in turn, establish a total anticipated expenditure for that individual. Each

² The recipient's age group, the projected age-appropriate benefits offered, potential prioritization capabilities, and a monetary allowance identified for the projected benefit provide the case manager with a fiscal baseline for each individual that can then be extrapolated to estimate the costs for the larger population

subsequent age appropriate model would have the capability to build upon benefits previously provided services in identifying new services or actions appropriate to the new age group. Thus, this approach provides a predefined framework that is easy to understand, replicate, and automate. It also has the capability of clearly defining the costs of services provided to each individual. Further, this approach dramatically simplifies the framework for collecting and analyzing budgetary and performance data on the program overall, offering the possibility of substantially improved management information.

This “standard model” approach can be structured to insure that each individual receives established “mandatory” benefits, while also providing the flexibility for additional optional benefits tailored to meet the individual’s needs. This approach is flexible enough to identify those benefits that are age-appropriate and that have potential value to some members of the age group, but not necessarily to all members. For example, “paid SAT fees” for college-bound youth, or “paid marching band uniforms” for the musically adept could be accommodated. It could also respond to a grouping of individuals based upon any identified category into which they may be placed, e.g. a three-tiered prioritized grouping based upon level of assistance that is required.

In responding to an “emergency” situation the “standard model” approach can either budget for the response in the model structure or the model can reallocate resources from other lower priority program expenditures, i.e. reallocation from a celebration to provide for an emergency housing requirement. The “standard model” approach also establishes the means of identifying “unmet needs” or needs that represent desired, but unfunded, benefits. Since available revenue amounts can be volatile, these benefits may be available in “standard models” for one year, but not necessarily for the next year.

Such a system should be supported by a centralized database accessible by all DCFS personnel throughout the County. With all records available online, incorporating the appropriate level of security, a youth that was “lost” to the system could receive walk-in assistance at the Alumni Resource Center. Changing personnel with shifting caseloads could access information on the individual from anywhere over an intranet.

Recommendations

6. Improve the information systems infrastructure and data handling capabilities, enabling DCFS workers to obtain data on any client from any place in the County. To the extent possible, adopt a “standard model” approach, using a matrix design to document the services or benefits appropriate for each age grouping as the basis for developing a customized Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP).

7. Direct the Chief Information Officer to assign a staff member to the Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS) as a temporary Departmental Co-CIO, tasked to assist DCFS in bringing department-wide IT infrastructure up to modern standards and to assist the Emancipation Services Group in designing appropriate support systems.

VI. HOUSING

Although any study of emancipation services requires attention be placed upon all of the services being delivered, the scope of this review does not enable an analysis of each of these services. This does not mean to imply that each of these services lacks in importance since, clearly, the emancipated population requires assistance in a number of areas to prepare them to take on the responsibilities of adulthood. Each of the services delivered, whether it is education, health care, job development, or others, are important. From within this set of needs, transitional housing is arguably the most compelling for both soon-to-be and emancipated foster youth. Without affordable housing - and the stability it brings to their lives - these youth cannot focus on acquiring or utilizing the life, educational and vocational skills required to achieve successful adulthood. Appropriate, service-enriched, well-located housing is the basis for independence and an essential piece of Los Angeles County's Emancipation Services Program.

A full analysis of this need is presented in Appendix 1. This Appendix is a snapshot of the current and planned transitional housing resources for emancipated foster youth (EFY) - as well as youth of similar ages - in Los Angeles County, and how they are distributed across Los Angeles County's eight Service Planning Areas (SPAs). These SPAs, adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 1993, were developed to promote interdepartmental and intersector data sharing, service planning and coordination. They provide a useful framework for evaluating geographic-based information. Fortuitously, the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority has also adopted these SPAs for its planning and coordination activities, thus enabling a broader analyses and more comprehensive service delivery design between these bodies to serve this population.

Recommendations

8. Double the amount of shelter, transitional and permanent housing for pre-emancipated and emancipated foster youth over the next 3 years to bring the total to at least 1100 beds, approximately 50% of the anticipated need.
9. A continuum of housing resources should be established for emancipated foster youth, runaway and homeless youth, and transition age young adults in each SPA in relative proportion to the number of youth in out-of-home care in that SPA. This continuum includes shelters, scattered site apartments, apartment buildings, and congregate living facilities with a range of supervision levels and associated support services.
10. An operational database of all available housing for pre-emancipated and emancipated youth should be built that can instantaneously and continuously show what housing vacancies are available, where, and at what cost.
11. Full-time "apartment or housing locators" should be hired to find, secure, and maintain safe apartments for emancipated foster youth in SPAs of high need.

12. Provide funds for foster parents, foster family agencies, and group homes to continue to house and provide services to youth who turn 18, for a reasonable transition period (e.g., 6 months to 1 year), until permanent housing can be obtained.

13. Ensure that Los Angeles County's total current allotment of THP and THPP housing slots, ILP Room and Board Assistance funds, and HUD Section 8 vouchers are fully utilized

14. Use some ILP (Chafee Act) revenue to supplement Section 8 vouchers to secure apartments/housing in higher rent SPAs and sub-SPA areas.

VII. CONCLUSION

The Commission is encouraged by the actions taken by the County since the initiation of its work. There is obviously a cooperative sense among the participants to work on developing an effective and efficient organization. The recommendations that have been made in this report are meant to be another step along this path. Implementing these recommendations will advance the process, as will the continuing work of the Interim Management Team established by the CAO. This work will reflect the ability of these diverse organizations to transcend traditional departmental boundaries and may well result in a future model of cooperative action.

Recommendation

15. Direct the Auditor-Controller, in coordination with the Economy and Efficiency Commission, to review recommendations of the Commission and the actions taken by County and report his findings to the Board within 6 to 12 months.

APPENDIX 1

TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

Introduction

Arguably, transitional housing is the most compelling need of both soon-to-be and emancipated foster youth. Without affordable housing - and the stability it brings to their lives - these youth cannot focus on acquiring or utilizing the life, educational and vocational skills required to achieve successful adulthood. Appropriate, service-enriched, well-located housing is truly the basis for independence and an essential piece of Los Angeles County's Emancipation Services program.

This section presents a snapshot of the current and planned transitional housing resources for emancipated foster youth (EFY) - as well as youth of similar ages - in Los Angeles County, and how they are distributed across Los Angeles County's eight Service Planning Areas (SPAs). These SPAs, adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 1993, were developed to promote interdepartmental and inter-sector data sharing, service planning and coordination and provide a useful framework for evaluating geographic-based information. Fortuitously, the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority has also adopted these SPAs for its planning and coordination activities, thus enabling broader analyses and more comprehensive service delivery design between these bodies for this population group.

There are six major housing programs, which are discussed below that provide transitional housing for youth, five of which specifically target emancipated foster youth.

Transitional Housing Program (THP)

The largest program is the Transitional Housing Program (THP), which serves emancipated youth, ages 18 - 21, from the county's dependency system. Its goal is to prevent emancipated foster youth who are at imminent risk of homelessness from becoming homeless and to provide them with the necessary life skills to become self-supporting

The THP is a unique public-private partnership involving the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the United Friends of the Children (UFC) Bridges to Independence Program, the Community Development Commission (LA. County's Housing Authority), the L.A. County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), and the Weingart Foundation.

The concept for the THP grew out of a series of discussions between the directors of CDC and DCFS on how to spend a first HUD grant of \$1.2 million, initially targeted for rental housing with attached supportive services. A shared commitment to develop a permanent inventory of housing for EFY - and a joint realization that these HUD monies could be leveraged by many millions of housing dollars available to CDC plus service dollars available to DCFS to build this inventory - led to the eventual creation of the THP partnership described above and a current total of 284 beds.

Since this program began in 1996, it has served 900 youth - 788 former foster youth and 112 of their children. THP's precursor - the Homeless Foster Youth Project (HFYP) - served 70 youth through two HUD grants awarded in 1992 and 1994.

THP strives to "provide a hand up, not a hand out," according to one of the program architects, so that youth are adequately prepared to be self-sufficient adults. Accordingly, to be eligible for this program, youth must work and/or attend school; must not be involved with drugs, possess any weapons, or engage in theft or fraud; may not receive income support from other public service systems; must open, maintain and contribute to a savings account; and must pay rent equivalent to 10% of their gross earnings (these monies are then returned to the youth when they exit the program).

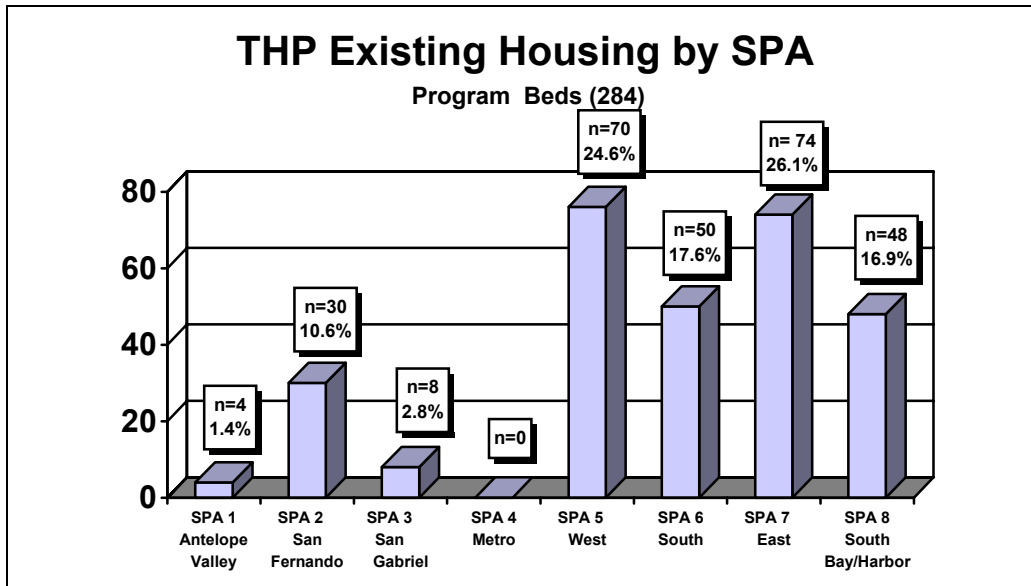
Multi-unit apartment buildings and scattered site housing rentals are utilized with utilities paid and furniture provided. Live-in supervision is provided at most sites and social workers, one for each 20-25 youth, provide case management and a host of other services to program youth. Educational assistance, job training/career counseling and life skills training are also provided and visiting experts offer assistance in budgeting, money management, tax preparation, advise participants with respect to legal issues, and address health and other concerns. Youth receive \$200 per month in food certificates (\$250 if they have a child), bus passes or tokens, and childcare assistance of up to \$350 per month if needed. The maximum stay for the THP is 18 months and, if warranted, aftercare/follow-up services are provided for an additional six months.

One key component of this program is a six-bed house in Sylmar that serves as a residence for special needs youth. Intensive support and supervision, mental health counseling, education regarding psychotropic medications, etc. is provided to these program youth in addition to other THP services.

A total of \$12,489,838 in HUD Supportive Housing Program grants has been awarded to Los Angeles County for THP since 1996, with another \$5,488,837 provided by United Friends of the Children in cash matches for operations and supportive services. In addition, CDC's contribution to date has totaled \$9.8 million to either construct or rehabilitate apartments that are providing 95 permanent program beds through long-term rental agreements with UFC.³ Another 55 beds are now being developed through five separate projects.

During 2001-2002, the County is administering 11 separate HUD grants for the THP, totaling \$4,825,221 for the program's 284 funded beds - \$3,466,080 in HUD monies and \$1,359,141 in UFC matching funds. In addition, DCFS contributes the monies to fund the employment benefits earned by program social workers. Of the 11 separate HUD grants for the THP, only one - HUD #2 - provides for housing countywide; the other 10 target specific geographic areas.

³ The amounts indicated do not represent the total funds expended on the program. Other funds, that include such items as administrative overhead, cannot be identified at this time.



As is illustrated in the above graphic, THP beds are located in every Los Angeles County Service Planning Area (SPA) - albeit unevenly - except for SPA 4 (Metro), an area that has the highest number of transitional housing for other groups comprising the Los Angeles homeless population and the geographic area with the second highest rate of poverty for Los Angeles children and families. Apparently this omission is due to the fact that SPA 4 is located entirely (except for the City of West Hollywood) within the City of Los Angeles and the County Housing Authority - a major partner in the THP - is not permitted to spend funds there, as Los Angeles has its own housing authority.

Of the 284 program beds that have been funded, 220 were occupied as of November 30, 2001, with two more to be processed the first week of December 2001.

Key reasons for the gap in the number of beds between those funded and those actually in use include:

- The difficulty in finding safe locations for rental apartments for this population of youth.
- The low fair market value rate determined by HUD for Los Angeles area apartments, i.e. \$782 per month for a 2 BR unit.
- Landlords who refuse to rent to this particular population or who terminate leasing to this population because of negative experiences with the youth stemming from their inexperience in apartment living - i.e., frequent and/or loud parties, recreational drug use, and poor housekeeping habits.
- Wait lists in some geographic areas due to youth preferences for living in their own communities or in those areas where their jobs or schools are located.

Other challenges for this program include:

- Keeping a balance between securing scattered site housing across all the communities of Los Angeles County - mainstreaming the youth - versus keeping the youth near enough to each other to allow for meetings, networking and get-togethers and to enable adequate caseload management.
- Simultaneously administering multiple grants with different time spans and geographic catchment areas. Youth are often moved from one apartment to another at their request due to school or work changes, roommate problems, etc. or because, perhaps, a landlord has terminated an apartment lease (or vacated an entire building). If no other housing is currently available in that HUD grant's geographic area, the youth must be administratively closed out on the first grant and opened on the next. Also, at the start of each year all youth must be closed out of each grant and then re-entered. Thus, tracking youth and achieving/maintaining individual occupancy goals for each grant is difficult.

In spite of these issues, this well-conceived, well-executed, and well-financed program for former foster youth has served as a national model. It has received extensive recognition and has been replicated by various jurisdictions across the U.S.

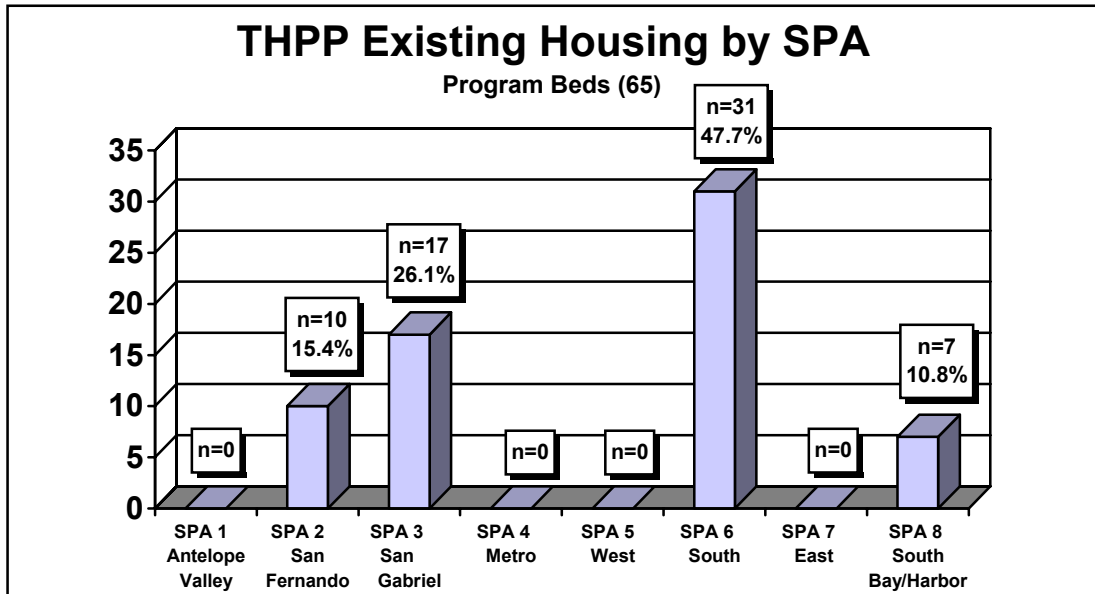
Transitional Housing Placement Program (THPP)

A second major housing program is the Transitional Housing Placement Program (THPP), often referred to as "Emancipation Plus" to avoid confusion with the THP and other similarly named programs. Though called a different name - at the suggestion of the Los Angeles County Auditor-Controller in his July 1999 Report⁴ - it is still generally known by THPP, as this is the name of the state program from which it was established. The THPP was created in February 1996 by AB 1198 - as a pilot program in 3 counties - through the redirection of Social Security Title IV E (AFDC-FC) monies. It was made permanent by AB 2774 in 1999. THPP serves 17 and 18 year old pre-emancipated youth who are enrolled in the county's Independent Living Program (ILP), are seniors in high school and are expected to graduate within one year, and who are in good standing with their schools and with their current placements.

Scattered site housing, along with supportive services, is provided to eligible youth through 7 California-licensed contract agencies located in 4 of the county's eight service planning areas. Current providers include: First Steps for Youth, Gay and Lesbian Adolescent Social Services (G.L.A.S.S.), Hope Opportunity Motivation Education (H.O.M.E.), National Family Life and Education Center, Project Focus, Renaissance Unlimited, and Youth Employment Systems' Success House. Approximately \$2000 per month per youth is allocated for housing, utilities, telephone, food, clothing, transportation, and personal care items as well as ILP services such as educational assistance, employment training, life skills and caseload planning.

⁴ Los Angeles County Auditor-Controller, Review of Children and Family Services' Transitional Housing Placement Program, June 3, 1999.

As of mid-November 2001, this program was serving 65 youth from the DCFS and Probation systems, although the stated goal has been to serve up to 600 youth per year. When the program became permanent in 1999, an Auditor-Controller report was initiated to determine the cause(s) for the low number of youth served - 25 DCFS and 4 Probation youth since the program's inception. The report concluded that a primary reason appeared to be Los Angeles County's initial decision (due to a rate issue) to limit this program to youth residing either at MacLaren Children's Center or in-group homes, even though all youth in out-of-home care were eligible. Although this policy was changed in 1999, the number of participating youth remains small.



Echoing the Transitional Housing Program, no housing has been secured for THPP in the Metro area (SPA 4). There is also no THPP housing in such key communities as the Antelope Valley (SPA 1), East Los Angeles (SPA 7) or in the San Fernando Valley (SPA 2) except for the North Hollywood area. Thus, significant numbers of youth accepted into the program cannot be appropriately placed.

Some believe that DCFS does not devote enough attention or resources to make this program really work. Many case-carrying Children Social Workers (CSWs) and youth in the system continue to be unaware of this unique placement program for foster youth still in the system, confusing it with the THP for emancipated youth. Thus, by the time youth apply or are referred, they are no longer eligible. The two existing THPP staff members outreach to line workers and Children's Court personnel, as they are able, but a comprehensive education and recruitment effort has not been possible with such a small staff.

Also, the Auditor-Controller found that just over 50% of the accepted applications "did not result in a placement because there were no service providers in the geographical area where the youth

currently resided and attended high school”⁵ (DCFS policy requires that THPP program youth remain in their current high school in order to minimize disruption).

Further, at least one provider terminated their contract with the program due to the high rent costs in the far eastern part of the county. Only 7 vendors currently remain in the program out of the 21 originally selected. To recruit additional providers at this point, a second Request for Proposal (RFP) is needed; however, without larger numbers of referred youth, it is unlikely that new providers would remain in the program for long.

To compound matters further, although the THPP program is housed administratively in DCFS, it is located in a different operational division than the THP program. This prevents effective joint planning, outreach, resource generation and evaluation activities with that major housing program and the overall Emancipation Services/Independent Living Program (ES/ILP). Initially, the program was placed in a separate bureau, so this organizational location is an improvement.

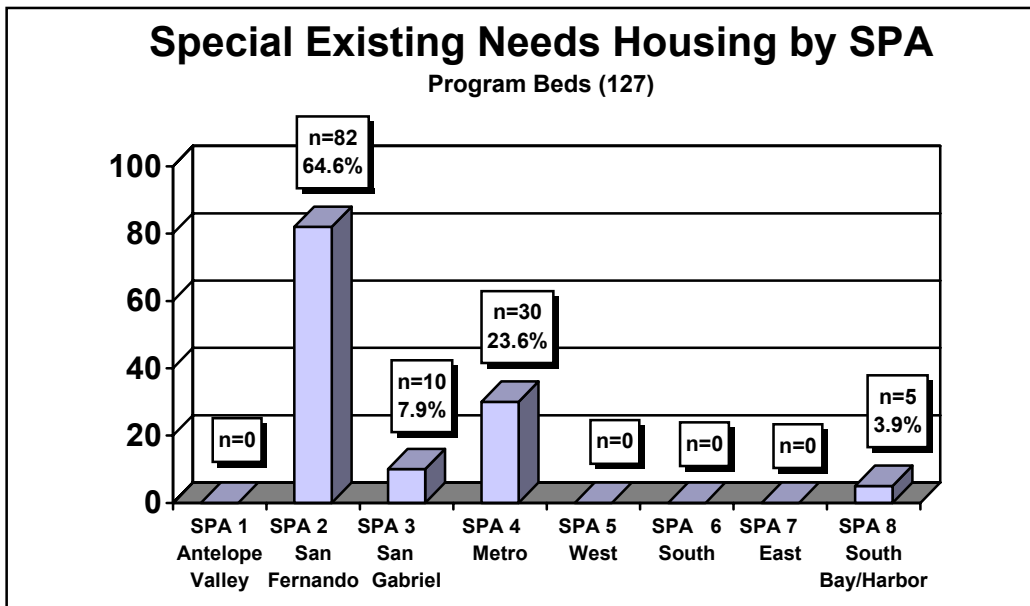
AB 427, which went into effect in January 2002, expands eligibility for the THPP program by extending it to 16 year olds and by specifically adding otherwise eligible probation youth and youth using psychotropic medications. It also creates an opportunity to increase payments per youth up to the average group home level for 16 to 18 year olds. Further, it expands the definition of independent settings for youth to include single-family dwellings and condominiums, thus increasing housing placement options. These changes should help THPP to reach its full program potential, although some advocates believe that 16 year olds and most 17 year old youth are just too young and inexperienced to handle quasi-independent living arrangements - especially those coming directly from group homes - and that this program may not, therefore, be able to expand much more.

Special Needs Housing

Special Needs Housing for those transition-aged youth with mental health issues, facing alcohol or drug abuse, or with other unique situations, is provided through a variety of partnerships and funding sources including federal HUD, EPSDT, and/or SSI monies, DMH contracts, non-profit agencies, UFC, the Weingart Foundation and other private organizations/funders.

Currently, 11 providers in 4 of the 8 SPAs serve 127 youth from the DCFS, Probation and Mental Health systems. Contract agencies include Penny Lane, Hillview Mental Health, Harbor House, Portals, Sycamores, B.R.I.D.G.E.S. Inc., Hollywood YWCA’s A Brighter Future, San Fernando Valley Community Mental Health, Vista Opportunity Centers, Rancho San Antonio, and The Village. Most youth served by these agencies are housed in congregate care or dedicated apartment facilities; some are able to be served in scattered site housing if supported with intensive services including, in some cases, wrap-around services.

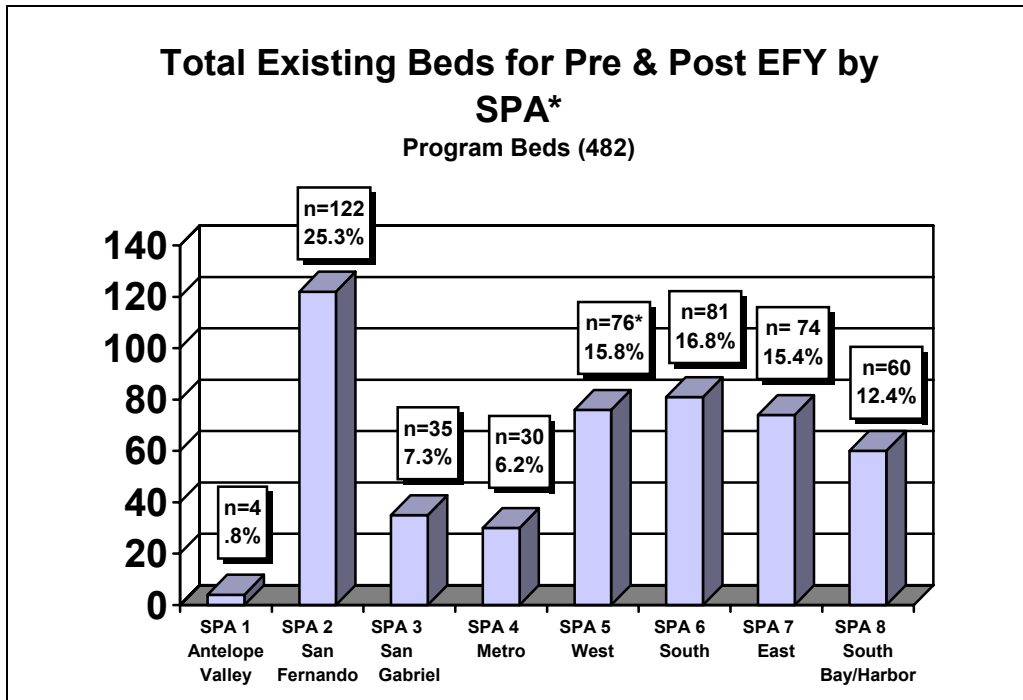
⁵ Los Angeles County Auditor-Controller, Review of Children and Family Services’ Transitional Housing Placement Program, June 3, 1999, pg. 5



Also, several providers are planning to develop, within the next two years, either new or expanded programs for youth with special needs:

New/Expanded Housing Programs For Special Needs			
SPA	Location	Intended Purpose	#
1	Tarzana Treatment Centers	Beds for drug-addicted youth	3
2	Hillview Mental Health	Beds for mental health youth	12
3	Homes for Life	Beds for mental health youth (June 2002)	18
	Athena		
	Sycamores	Beds for mental health youth (April 2002)	8
4	St. Anne's	Beds for mothers with children (end of 2003)	38
5	N/A		
6	A Community of Friends	Beds for mental health youth (April 2003)	20
	Step Out Program		
7	N/A		
8	N/A		
TOTAL			99

The following graphic summarizes the existing total number of beds for three major housing programs - THP, THPP, and Special Needs Housing.



*Includes one non-government funded 6 bed program.

The following table illustrates the combined total of existing and planned beds

Existing and Planned Beds for Pre & Post EFY by SPA				
SPA	THP/THPP/Special Needs Existing Beds	Planned Beds*	Total Beds	% Total Beds
1	4	3	7	1.2
2	122	12	134	23.1
3	35	26	61	10.5
4	30	38	68	11.7
5	76		76	13.1
6	81	20	101	17.4
7	74		74	12.7
8	60		60	10.3
TOTAL	482	99	581	100.0

*Word of mouth information; no attempt was made to survey potential providers.

Room and Board Assistance

Room and Board Assistance is provided to emancipated foster youth, ages 18 - 21, from the DCFS and Probation systems through the 1999 Chafee Foster Care Independence Act funds.

Eligible youth include those on waiting lists for other transitional housing programs, those not eligible for other housing programs (for example, those in college or employed who are residing outside of Los Angeles County) and those youth whose need for housing assistance is documented in their Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP). Youth receiving Room and Board Assistance are also eligible to receive the full range of ILP services, including job-related costs/training, life skills classes, counseling, health expenses, child care and transportation.

Sixty-five youth requested and received Room and Board Assistance in October 2001 (63 from DCFS and 2 from Probation); 30 requested this assistance in September 2001 (29 from DCFS and 1 from Probation). Additional youth are receiving multiple months assistance through ongoing commitments - for example, those living in college dorms whose housing costs are paid per semester - so these numbers undercount the total youth served by this program.

All of the youth receiving Room and Board Assistance reside in scattered site housing through youth rental agreements with landlords, or in college dormitories. Staff uses their own judgment as to what is appropriate to spend on housing, as there is no "cap" on or maximum amount of rent allowable.

Most youth choose to live in "Los Angeles proper" with clusters of youth residing in the vicinities of the schools/colleges/universities they are attending. Because of the high fluctuation rate of youth in this program from month to month, with housing locations completely dependant on where recipient youth choose to live, no breakdown of housing by SPA is currently available.

HUD Section 8 Vouchers

HUD Section 8 Vouchers are another link to housing for low-income youth, many of whom are former foster youth. Section 8 offers three different voucher programs for youth (and adults) with mental health issues - Homeless, Aftercare and Shelter Plus Care - that provide permanent housing. These programs are provided through the Los Angeles County and/or City Housing Authorities and administered by the Department of Mental Health (DMH) as well as other, primarily nonprofit agencies. Homeless and Aftercare vouchers are valid for an unlimited time, with support services provided for at least the first six months, while Shelter Plus Care vouchers are for a maximum of 5 years, as long as the youth continuously receives services throughout this period of time. Under the Shelter Plus Care program, providers must provide a monthly service match equal to the voucher amount in value. Aftercare vouchers, previously provided by the City of Los Angeles Housing Authority, are no longer available as of June 2001. DMH has a five-year contract in place with the City Housing Authority and is now in the process of applying for both Homeless and Shelter Plus Care program vouchers.

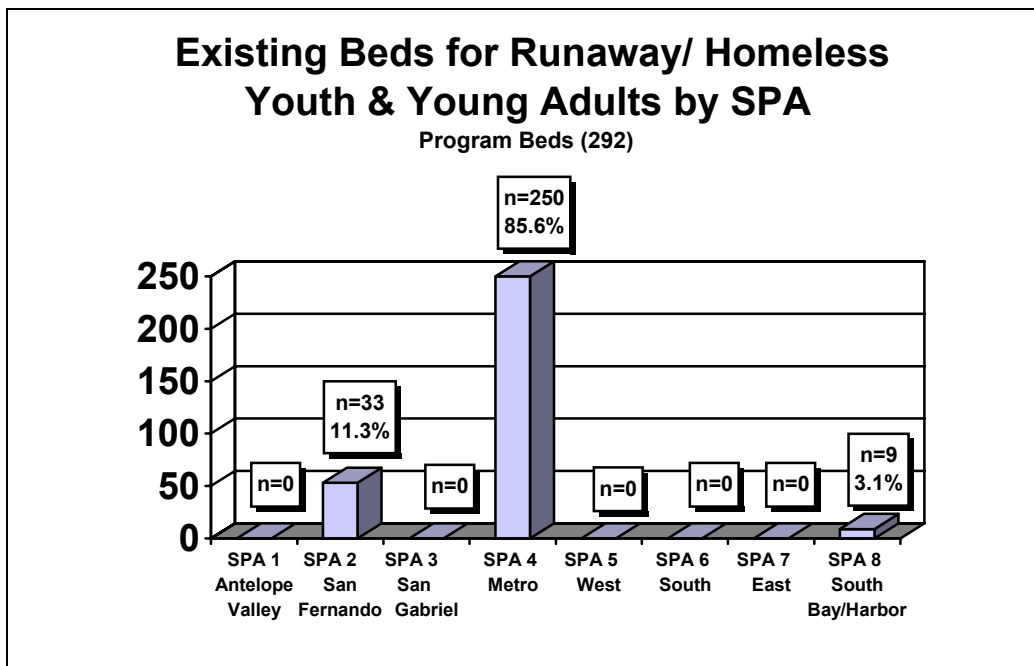
A maximum of 25 Section 8 Homeless vouchers (through the Los Angeles County Housing Authority) can be utilized by DMH - through their contract - at any one time; more can then be requested. To date, all of Los Angeles County eligible youth who have asked for these vouchers have been able to receive them. DMH staff report that apartments are fairly easy to locate and pay for in SPAs 4 (Metro) and 6 (South), as they are the SPAs with the highest levels of poverty and rents are, accordingly, reasonable. Youth have a difficult time, however, locating appropriate apartment rentals on their own, especially in higher rent areas such as SPA 5 (West).

Some funds are available to supplement the federal fair market rate in order to secure and maintain apartments, but more monies are needed for this purpose to enable all youth to remain in the communities they were raised in and where their support systems and services are located. As with the Room and Board Assistance program, because youth secure their own apartments under this program, no breakdown of housing by SPA is available.

In August 2001, the County and City of Los Angeles Housing Authorities each applied for 100 HUD Section 8 Family Unification NOFA (Notice of Funding Availability) transitional housing vouchers, in partnership with DCFS. These possible 200 vouchers, each good for up to 18 months of rental subsidies, would be available for emancipated foster youth, ages 18 - 21, from the DCFS and Probation systems.

Other Housing

Other housing for emancipated youth and for runaway and/or homeless youth (“unaccompanied youth”) of similar ages and circumstances exists as well. One non-government funded program for emancipated foster youth is provided by the YWCA of Santa Monica and serves 6 youth. Other agencies serve runaway and/or homeless youth from 10 to 17 years of age (or somewhere within that range) and provide a total of 111 beds throughout Los Angeles County. Key providers include the 1736 Crisis Center, Catholic Charities’ Angel’s Flight, Center for Human Rights and Constitutional Law’s Safe Haven, Children of the Night, Jovenes, the L.A. Youth Network, the Tarzana Treatment Centers, and Salvation Army’s “The Way In ” Youth Shelter. Still other agencies provide beds and services for an additional 181 young adults, ages 18 - 25 (or somewhere within that range), including Covenant House, the L.A. Gay and Lesbian Center, New Economics for Women’s La Posada and The Salvation Army. The graph below illustrates the total number of beds available by SPA for the sum of these categories.



Hundreds of additional beds for adults, 18 years of age and older, are also available in various communities throughout the County.

Current and Planned Beds by Program	
Beds for EFY	# of Beds
THP	284
THPP	65
Special Housing Needs	127
Non-government funded Program	<u>6</u>
Sub Total	482
Room and Board Assistance	65
HUD Section 8 Vouchers	25
Sub Total	<u>90</u>
Total	572
Beds for Runaway/Homeless Youth and Young Adults	
Runaway and Homeless Youth (10 - 17)	111
Homeless Young Adults (18 – 25)	181
Total	<u>292</u>
Total Existing Beds	864
Total Planned Beds	<u>99</u>
Total Beds	963*

*This total - and all of the program numbers that comprise it - should be considered estimates, as the numbers of beds, apartments and youth occupying them are in constant flux. Data regarding each of the six outlined programs were obtained from primary sources, with some secondary sources used to provide supplemental information. Some “word of mouth” information was used to gather statistics for transitional age, non-emancipated foster youth and for the number of planned additional beds, although most of the numbers and locations for the projected beds were validated through contacts with the agencies involved. The reported data is intended to present a general overview of the array of existing and future housing resources for former foster youth and other youth of those ages for program planning purposes.

Primary sources consulted include:

THP -- Shiralyn Ellerbe (DCFS) and Sandra Rudnick (UFC)

THPP -- Rosalind Pariot (DCFS)

Special Needs -- Stephanie DuCaine (DCFS) and Barbara Wallace (DMH)

Room and Board Assistance -- David Mitchell (Probation), Luvirda Carter and Caroline Christian (DCFS)

Section 8 Vouchers -- Barbara Wallace (DMH)

Transition Age Housing -- Ruth Schwartz and Ali Berzon (Shelter Partnership), and Susan Rabinovitz (Coordinating Council for Runaway and Homeless Youth)

Providers contacted directly include: Tarzana Treatment Centers, Penny Lane, Portals, The Village, Hillview Mental Health, San Fernando Valley Mental Health Center, Rancho San Antonio, St. Anne’s and A Community of Friends.

Another consideration with respect to developing a continuum of housing inventory across Los Angeles County is that the inventory identified in the table above - and the services attached to it

through the various independent living programs - should be available to the entire spectrum of eligible youth.

Advocates generally delineate three broad categories of emancipating youth:

- Those who are doing well in school and/or have good enough, well paying jobs to be able to handle rent payments and related expenses, who may have some family ties or other support, and who have an idea of what they want to do with their lives and how to get there.
- Those who have completed high school but generally have no family or other support systems, have few or no financial resources, and who do not know where they want to go.
- Those with special needs or serious difficulties, including those facing mental health issues or wrestling with drug or alcohol problems.

Youth in the first group may only need first and last month's rent deposit assistance or housing during school holidays; youth in the second group may require housing in dedicated apartment buildings or in scattered site apartments coupled with other independent living services and some adult supervision; while the third group may require congregate facility housing along with intensive services and supervision. A portion of the youth in the third group, with proper supervision, may be able to transition to less structured housing options after a period of time.

In addition, other sub-groups of youth need to be addressed specifically, including pregnant and/or parenting teens with one or more young children, gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender youth, deaf or hard of hearing youth, medically fragile youth and those with disabilities, delinquent youth (those coming out of the Probation system in particular), and both documented and undocumented immigrant youth.

Analysis

1. Although Los Angeles County has a total of 572 beds for pre-emancipated and emancipated foster youth, there are still not enough beds to meet the projected need, which, interestingly, has not been identified anywhere. A conservative estimate of the need would be for 500 transitional beds for pre-emancipated foster youth and another 1800 beds for the EFY population, since about 1200 of the 1800 youth who emancipate each year from the foster care system (through the dependency and probation systems) need housing for an average of 18 months. Los Angeles County is only providing about 25% of this need, although this is significantly higher than what neighboring California counties are providing (or are in the process of developing) for their populations of pre-emancipated and EFY: Santa Barbara (10%), San Diego (8.6%), and Orange (7.6%). Nevertheless, both transitional and permanent housing for these Los Angeles youth is still woefully inadequate.
2. Existing beds for EFY are not evenly distributed across Los Angeles County or correlated with need.

Distribution of Out-of Home Care Population and Existing Beds						
SPA	DCFS	Probation	Total	% of Actual Total	Pre/Post EFY Beds	% of Total
1	2,703	46	2,749	5.9	4	0.8
2	3,313	135	3,448	7.5	122	25.3
3	6,843	144	6,987	15.1	35	7.3
4	4,923	69	4,992	10.8	30	6.2
5	620	23	643	1.4	76	15.8
6	10,502	286	10,788	23.3	81	16.8
7	4,301	151	4,452	9.6	74	15.4
8	5,915	152	6,067	13.1	60	12.4
SPA Total	39,120	1,006	40,126	86.7	482	100.0
Missing	5,909	222	6,131	13.3		
Actual Total	45,029**	1,228**	46,257**	100.00	482	100.0

*Source: Los Angeles County Children's Planning Council Children's Score Card (November 2001 Draft using 1999 data)

**These totals, used to determine the percentages in the % of Actual Total column, are more than the sum of the SPA numbers due to missing geographic data for 13.3% of the case records.

The previous table indicates that the following SPAs have proportionately more housing resources that their share of the out-of-home care population would dictate:

- SPA 2 has 25.3% of the available housing yet only 7.5% of the population.
- SPA 5 has 15.8% of the housing with only 1.4% of the population.
- SPA 7 has 15.4% of the housing with only 9.6% of the population.

The remaining SPAs, with the exception of SPA 8, have proportionately fewer housing resources than their share of the out-of-home care population would dictate:

- SPA 3 has 15.1% of the population yet only 7.3% of the available housing.
- SPA 6 has 23.3% of the population and only 16.8% of the housing.
- SPA 1 has 5.9% of the population with less than .8% of the housing.
- SPA 4 has 10.8 % of the population with only 6.2% of the housing.
- SPA 8 is the only SPA with an approximately equal share of the population and available housing, although it should have some additional beds to completely match its need.

3. There is not a continuum of housing inventory and programs in each SPA that meets the needs of all groups of eligible youth. For example:

- There is no THP or THPP housing in SPA 4, although that SPA has the 4th highest number of youth in out-of-home care.
- SPAs 1, 5 and 7 have no THPP program housing for their pre-emancipated youth.
- The bulk (64.6%) of special needs housing is in SPA 2 with none available in SPAs 1, 5, 6, or 7 and less than 4% of program housing in SPA 8.

- Almost all (85.6%) of the housing for runaway and homeless youth and transition age young adults is in SPA 4, with none in SPAs 1, 3, 5, 6, or 7, even though significant pockets of these youth exist across the County, particularly in the beach cities.
4. There is no central repository of housing program information for pre-emancipated and emancipated foster youth or for other similarly aged youth in Los Angeles, nor any clear projections of the need by category of youth.

Recommendations

8. Double the amount of shelter, transitional and permanent housing for pre-emancipated and emancipated foster youth over the next 3 years to bring the total to at least 1100 beds, approximately 50% of the anticipated need.

This will not be an easy task, for several reasons:

- Landlord reluctance to rent to this population of youth because of their difficult profile. Many are inexperienced in apartment living, lack credit histories, are unstable or transient, have mental health/emotional or drug/alcohol problems, etc.
- The Los Angeles market rental rates are too high for most programs to afford.
- There is a very long lead-time to develop dedicated housing facilities.
- Some advocates are dismayed that EFY are “grabbing the lion’s share” of the HUD funds available for Los Angeles County’s entire spectrum of homeless populations - to the detriment of other worthy groups - and may not support further HUD proposals.

Several promising ideas and possible funding sources are on the horizon, which may help substantially in accomplishing this objective:

- The City of Industry Redevelopment Housing Set-Aside Fund, which is comprised of tax increment revenue accrued by the City of Industry and is to be used exclusively for the purchase, construction or rehabilitation of affordable housing. One-half of the monies, estimated to be \$4 to \$5 million per year, has been allocated by the Board of Supervisors for the development of transitional housing for special needs populations, including EFY. The Fund is administered by the Community Development Commission and will be used to leverage up to several times its value in service dollars to provide comprehensive support to emancipated youth.

- The passage of AB 427 (effective January 1, 2002) which, among other things, creates the Supportive Transitional Emancipation Program (STEP). This program provides cash aid “equivalent to the basic rate provided to a foster family home provider” (\$569 per month) to former foster youth up to the age of 21 who are participating in an educational or training program or other activity consistent with their Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP). Any youth under the age of 21 who receives assistance under STEP is also eligible for transitional housing placement services (THPP+) for a maximum of 24 months. Los Angeles County, if it opts to participate, would be responsible for 60% of program costs.
- The creation of a full-time Housing Coordinator for Los Angeles County’s ES/ILP program to stimulate the building of a complete housing continuum and coordinate efforts to make it happen.

A continuum of housing resources should be established for emancipated foster youth, runaway and homeless youth, and transition age young adults in each SPA in relative proportion to the number of youth in out-of-home care in that SPA. This continuum includes shelters, scattered site apartments, apartment buildings, and congregate living facilities with a range of supervision levels and associated support services.

A varied and well-dispersed array of housing resources ensures that youth can live within their own communities in housing that best meets their changing needs.

The Coordinating Council for Runaway and Homeless Youth, co-chaired by Children’s Hospital Los Angeles and DCFS, has specifically recommended, for example, that there be at least one 6-bed emergency shelter for youth under the age of 18 and one for those 18 years of age and older in each SPA. Also, many experts have pointed out that there is a particular need to provide housing in each SPA for youth with less severe mental health needs.

A strong effort should be made to engage the City of Los Angeles in planning, locating and developing housing for emancipated foster youth within - in particular - SPAs 2, 4, 5, 6 and 8.

An operational database of all available housing for pre-emancipated and emancipated youth should be built that can instantaneously and continuously show what housing vacancies are available, where, and at what cost.

This would enable eligible youth to be appropriately referred or connected and the system as a whole to be properly managed.

This database - at a minimum - would include the THP, THPP, Special Needs Housing, Room and Board Assistance, Section 8 Vouchers and Runaway and Homeless Youth programs. It could then be used by placement agencies such as

DCFS and Probation and the ES/ILP network of Alumni Centers that will be created shortly.

Full-time “apartment or housing locators” should be hired to find, secure, and maintain safe apartments for emancipated foster youth in SPAs of high need.

These apartments would be utilized by all programs for this population, including THP, THPP, Room and Board Assistance, Section 8 Vouchers, AB 427’s new THPP+ Program, etc. These locators would also assist youth, agency staff, and youth mentors with landlord/tenant issues and other related areas.

Provide funds for foster parents, foster family agencies, and group homes to continue to house and provide services to youth who turn 18, for a reasonable transition period (e.g., 6 months to 1 year), until permanent housing can be obtained.

Ensure that Los Angeles County’s total current allotment of THP and THPP housing slots, ILP Room and Board Assistance funds, and HUD Section 8 vouchers are fully utilized.

Use some ILP (Chafee Act) revenue to supplement Section 8 vouchers to secure apartments/housing in higher rent SPAs and sub-SPA areas.