

Transitional Housing Program for Emancipated Foster/Probation (THP-Plus)

The THP-Plus is a transitional housing placement opportunity for emancipated foster youth, aged 18-24, who emancipated from the child welfare system. The goal of the program is to provide a safe living environment while helping youth achieve self-sufficiency so that they can learn life skills upon leaving the foster care support system. Counties electing to participate in the program provide supervised independent living housing and support services. Participants may live alone, with departmental approval, or with roommates in apartments and single-family dwellings with regular support provided by THP-Plus agency staff, county social workers and ILP coordinators. Support services include regular visits to participants' residences, educational guidance, employment counseling and assistance reaching emancipation goals outlined in participants' Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP), the case plan emancipation readiness document. Several counties have approved plans and are implementing the THP-Plus.

County THP-Plus Implementation Procedure

- Counties must pre-approve all providers prior to submission of the proposal to the California

Department of Social Services (CDSS). This information must be included in the proposed plan. Upon review and approval of the proposal by the Independent Living Program Policy Unit's staff, the county may begin the review and certification of agency plans.

- Send or e-mail a letter of intent to CDSS.
- Submit rate information to CDSS.
- Develop and submit a plan to CDSS which meets the requirements of Welfare and Institutions Code Sections 16522 through 16522.6. Regulations regarding THP-Plus can be found at www.childsworld.ca.gov or www.dss.cahwnet.gov.
- Receive a plan-approval letter from CDSS.

THP-Plus Rate

Pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code Section 11403(a)(2), the rate for THP-Plus shall not exceed 70 percent of the average RCL payment the county pays to group homes for foster youth 16 to 18 years old, contingent upon the following conditions:

- Funding shall be subject to the sharing rations specified in Welfare and Institutions Code Section 15200.
- The State portion of the rate shall be subject to the availability of the

Transitional Housing for Foster Youth Fund.

- If the Transitional Housing for Foster Youth Fund is depleted, the county shall pay the State share of the rate.

Funding for THP-Plus Services, Room and Board

The State will fund 100 percent of the nonfederal portion of the rate through the Transitional Housing for Foster Youth Fund. The 60 percent county match of the nonfederal portion has been eliminated.

THP-Plus Eligibility

- THP-Plus eligible youth are young adults who have emancipated from foster/probation care and are 18 through 24 years old, and are pursuing the county-approved goals they have developed in the STEP/THP-Plus TILP.
- Participation in THP-Plus is subject to: county participation in the program, the availability of safe and affordable housing, and the availability of program providers.
- The maximum time for THP-Plus participation is 24 cumulative months.

Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP)

Each participant in THP-Plus will utilize a STEP/THP-Plus TILP which describes the educational/vocational, or other goals related to self-sufficiency, mutually agreed upon by the youth and the county welfare, probation department, or independent living coordinator. The youth must be participating in the activities identified in the STEP/THP-Plus TILP. The TILP shall be updated annually. Participants are responsible for informing the county whenever changes occur that affect payment of aid, including changes in address, living circumstances, and educational, career and training programs.

THP-Plus Program Models

- Programs certified under these regulations shall be designed to provide a safe and adequate residence and allow participants a maximum amount of independence and self-sufficiency.
- Acceptable residential units include apartments, single family dwellings, condominiums, college dormitories, and host family models.
- Publicly supervised or privately operated shelters, or other living situations, including those with friends, family members, and others that provide temporary accommodation, are not acceptable.
- Public or private places not ordinarily used as a regular sleeping area are not acceptable, and may not be

utilized by a THP-Plus provider as accommodations for emancipated foster youth.

THP-Plus Agency Certification Standards

Providers of THP-Plus will apply for county certification rather than a CDSS license. Providers will submit a THP-Plus program plan to counties, and to CDSS, for approval. THP-Plus agencies' program plan must, at a minimum, ensure that:

- The program will only serve eligible youth;
- The program will not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, or disability, and that youth who were wards of the court, and youth receiving psychotropic medications shall be eligible for consideration in the program and shall not be automatically excluded due to these factors (Welfare and Institutions Code Section 16522.1(a)(1));
- The agency will, with the assistance of a county designee, assist each youth in the completion of the goals and activities described in the CDSS STEP/THP-Plus TILP form;
- The program plan includes a description of the program, and how it will ensure that participants live independently and accomplish the

goals described in their STEP/THP-Plus TILP;

- Services for THP-Plus participants are not discontinued without due process;
- THP-Plus participants have the right to be free from arbitrary or capricious rules, the right to understand all rules in writing and in appropriate languages and formats, the right to appeal any loss of benefits or services before they are suspended (unless imminent physical harm to someone would result), and the right to a grievance procedure;
- THP-Plus participants' right to confidentiality is respected. This right applies to dissemination, storage, retrieval and acquisition or identifiable information. The agency will not release information about a participant's receipt of services without a written release from the participant;
- THP-Plus participants' right to privacy is respected. Information will be requested of participants only when the information is specifically necessary for the provision of services. THP-Plus participants will not be required to supply personal information as a condition of obtaining services without written documentation verifying the necessity of the information;
- The agency will comply with California landlord/tenant law (Civil

Code Section 1940, et seq.) and/or the Transitional Housing Misconduct Act (Health and Safety Code Section 50580, et seq.);

- The program plan includes a description of the THP-Plus participation application process and selection criteria;
- The STEP/THP-Plus TILP is updated at least annually and as needed to reflect necessary changes;
- THP-Plus participants will be allowed the greatest amount of freedom possible in order to prepare them for self-sufficiency;
- Criminal background checks will be required for all agency employees;
- The THP-Plus program is clearly distinguishable from those that should be licensed as an Adult Residential Care facility under Health and Safety Code Sections 1502(a)(1) or 1503.5(a);
- Applicable provisions of Welfare and Institutions Code Section 16522.1 regarding THP-Plus requirements are incorporated into the plan;
- Programs will comply with applicable Federal, State, and local housing laws and fire clearance requirements;
- The housing provided to participants has reasonable access to schools, employment-appropriate supportive services, shopping, and medical care;

- No more than two THP-Plus participants share a bedroom;
- THP-Plus participants are given a choice regarding what services to access, and the location of the services (on-site or off-site), as long as the goals of the STEP/THP-Plus TILP are being met;
- When funds are retained by the provider on behalf of the tenant, the provider shall ensure that these funds are deposited in an interest bearing savings account in any bank or savings and loan institution whose deposits are insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation or the Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corporation. The principal and interest shall be distributed to the tenant when he/she leaves the program, or earlier if permitted by the THP-Plus program guidelines. For a full description of all regulations for the CDSS's Transitional Housing Placement Program, please refer to:

www.dss.cahwnet.gov/ord/ILP-TILP-T_1500.htm.

Conclusion

For additional information regarding the housing needs of emancipated needs of foster youth, you may need to refer to "The Report on the Housing Needs of Emancipated Foster Youth" which may be found on the Department's website

under the heading "Children and Family Services, Foster Care Reports." Also, AB 2972 (Chapter 1074, Statutes of 2002), AB 1354 (Chapter 46, Statutes of 2002), AB 1119 (Chapter 639, Statutes of 2002), and AB 427 (Chapter 125, Statutes of 2001) allow housing to be set aside for emancipated foster/probation youth, and other youth at risk of homelessness based on gender or age (up to 24 years old). For additional information or regulations, please go to www.dss.cahwnet.gov.



**TRANSITIONAL HOUSING
PROGRAM FOR
EMANCIPATED
FOSTER/PROBATION YOUTH**

THP-Plus

**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT
OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

**CHILDREN AND FAMILY
SERVICES DIVISION**

**CHILD AND YOUTH
PERMANENCY BRANCH**

**INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM
POLICY UNIT**

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