

**EL DORADO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA ITEM TRANSMITTAL**

**Meeting of
May 22, 2007**

AGENDA TITLE: Human Services Programs Assisting Youth Transitioning From Foster Care to Independence

DEPARTMENT: Human Services (SS)	DEPT SIGNOFF:	CAO USE ONLY: 5/4
CONTACT: John Litwinovich	<i>John Litwinovich</i>	<i>C. Laura Schwartz</i>
DATE: 5/2/2007	PHONE: 6163	

DEPARTMENT SUMMARY AND REQUESTED BOARD ACTION:
Human Services, Social Services Division, recommends that the Board of Supervisors confirm Board support for specialized services, including the Independent Living Program (ILP), the Transitional Housing Placement Program (THPP) and the Transitional Housing Program for Emancipated Foster/Probation Youth (THP-Plus), which help youth emancipating from foster care to become independent, responsible and productive members of our community. This action confirms Board concurrence and approval for current purchases and projects and conceptual approval for future expenditures that fall within the parameters of State of California guidelines and are approved by the Department Head.

CAO RECOMMENDATIONS: *Recommended approval. Laura S. Hill 5/8/07*

Financial impact? () Yes (x) No	Funding Source: (x) Gen Fund (x) Other
BUDGET SUMMARY:	Other: Federal State & County
Total Est. Cost <u>\$298,225.00</u>	CAO Office Use Only:
Funding	4/5's Vote Required () Yes (x) No
Budgeted <u>\$298,225.00</u>	Change in Policy () Yes (x) No
New Funding _____	New Personnel () Yes (x) No
Savings* _____	CONCURRENCES:
Other _____	Risk Management _____
Total Funding <u>\$298,225.00</u>	County Counsel _____
Change in Net County Cost <u>\$0.00</u>	Other _____

***Explain** Funds budgeted for FY 06/07 in each specialized program and included in the FY 07-08 Request

BOARD ACTIONS:

Vote: Unanimous _____ Or Ayes: Noes: Abstentions: Absent:	I hereby certify that this is a true and correct copy of an action taken and entered into the minutes of the Board of Supervisors Date: _____ Attest: Cindy Keck, Board of Supervisors Clerk By: _____
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EL DORADO COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
John Litwinovich
Director

May 2, 2007

El Dorado County Board of Supervisors
330 Fair Lane
Placerville, California 95667

Members of the Board:

Title: Human Services Programs Assisting Youth Transitioning From Foster Care to Independence

Recommendations:

Human Services, Social Services Division, recommends that the Board of Supervisors confirm Board support for specialized services, including the Independent Living Program (ILP), the Transitional Housing Placement Program (THPP) and the Transitional Housing Program for Emancipated Foster/Probation Youth (THP-Plus), which help youth emancipating from foster care to become independent, responsible and productive members of our community. This action confirms Board concurrence and approval for current purchases and projects and conceptual approval for future expenditures that fall within the parameters of State of California guidelines and are approved by the Department Head.

Reasons for Recommendations:

The Department of Human Services is charged with providing a range of services to assist foster youth in the years leading up to and following their “emancipation”, which occurs on their eighteenth birthday. Each year, whether prepared or not, approximately 50 youth exit foster care in our County. Some are reunited with their biological families; however, most face more uncertain futures, with many reaching the day when foster payment support ends and they are responsible for their own lives. The circumstances that youth then face range from continued caring support from their foster families to literally finding themselves on the street with nowhere to go. Too often, they face overwhelming odds in transitioning to responsible adulthood. In California, sixty-five percent of emancipating youth have been found in need of safe and affordable housing.

The Department of Human Services has developed three state-supported programs to assist foster youth in making positive transitions. Because these services are innovative and unique in nature, the following pages are intended both to provide you with information on this subject and to ensure your awareness and approval of the diverse types of expenditures occurring in these programs.

PROGRAMS – There are three principal programs offered to assist transitioning foster youth. The **Independent Living Program (ILP)** provides training, services and programs to assist current and former foster youth achieve self-sufficiency prior to and after leaving the foster care system. Some of the services provided include training in daily living skills, money management and decision making as well as financial assistance with college or vocational schools, housing and employment. Each year approximately 180 youth, ages 16 to 21, participate in the Independent Living Program.

The Transitional Housing Placement Program (THPP) is a community care licensed placement opportunity for youth in foster care. Participants, normally between the ages of sixteen and eighteen, may live alone or with roommates in apartments and single-family dwellings with regular support and supervision provided by THPP 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 Transitional Independent Living Plans, the emancipation readiness portion of youths' case plans. We currently are able to assist five youth per month with this program.

The Transitional Housing Program for Emancipated Foster/Probation Youth (THP-Plus) participants are young adults who have emancipated from foster/probation care, are eighteen through twenty-four years old and are pursuing county-approved goals they have developed in a Transitional Independent Living Plan. This program is designed to provide safe and adequate residences and to allow participants a maximum amount of independence and self-sufficiency, while providing them with needed support in helping them reach their goals. The maximum time for THP-Plus participation is twenty-four cumulative months. We currently are able to assist ten youth per month with this program.

COSTS AND SERVICES – State program guidelines provide for a wide range of services and allowable expenses to assist emancipating youth. Costs allowed under one or more of the above programs include rental housing, counseling services, on-the-job training, educational equipment and support, furniture and household goods, work related transportation, tools and clothing, incentive funding, training workshops and conferences, savings accounts, scholarship support, and other items.

SETTING PARAMETERS – In order to ensure accountability and effectiveness in the use of program funds, Human Services program implementation measures have linked assistance to responsibility and progress by emancipating youth. Each youth receives close guidance, must comply with program rules, must develop and follow a personal plan of action and must demonstrate ongoing progress towards independent adulthood. Incentives are earned rather than pre-awarded, educational opportunities are linked to school accomplishments, expenditures from savings accounts require prior approval, strict limitations are placed on the purchase of furniture and household goods, and progress is closely monitored. Human Services contracts with a private provider, Remi Vista, for direct supportive services, including a social worker assigned to each youth, evening and emergency services, transportation assistance, one-on-one life skills instruction and connections to community services, all important elements in ensuring successful programs.

SPECIFIC SERVICE EXAMPLES – With accountability as an ongoing priority, Human Services has moved forward to address the unique needs and challenges of each foster youth being served. Since those needs are not known prior to the beginning of each fiscal year, it is not feasible to budget costs in detail. However, the list below is intended to offer more specific examples of the types of Independent Living Program expenditures occurring during FY 2006–07:

- Computers and printers are being purchased for youth who either already are in or verifiably will be attending college or vocational schools. Each youth must fill out a two page application explaining why they need the computer and how they intend to use it for their college career. Computers and peripheral equipment will remain the property of the youth to whom they are awarded. Budgeted cost: \$16,000.
- Support funding is being provided for a youth to attend a Health Careers Academy in the Bay Area. This individual earned a nomination from her school to attend this career development opportunity by bringing her grade point average up from 1.9 to 3.71, as she explores a career in a medical field. Budgeted cost: \$2,145.
- Human Services is again this year collaborating with CASA to conduct a Town of Independence Camp, a three day experience in June whereby youth have an opportunity to practice their independent living skills in an experiential way, attending workshops on everything from budgeting and planning to cooking and job interviewing. Funds will be spent on facility and food costs. Budgeted cost: \$3,416.

In the THPP and THP-Plus programs, young people are provided with apartments and basic furnishings, as well as extensive guidance and counseling support as they pursue work and educational opportunities. For some young people, these programs are quite literally an alternative to homelessness.

SUCCESS STORIES: Youth transitioning beyond foster care each face special challenges, and in each case success is measured differently. A few real life examples help illustrate this point. For one youth, success meant seeking and obtaining help with his substance abuse problem, then entering into transitional housing and going on to gain employment and continue his education. For a second youth, success meant getting established in her first apartment, then moving to Humboldt County to continue her education. A third youth stayed with the Independent Living Program through years of work and school struggles, until finally obtaining a place to live and a full time job, and enrolling in college classes. For a fourth youth, success came in the form of a substantial financial aid package allowing her to attend a prestigious east coast university. While successes are measured differently, and not all youth meet their goals, the Independent Living Program has proven to be a tremendous asset in guiding youth and giving them an opportunity to succeed. The transitional housing programs also provide them with help in an area of great need, having a place to live, as they embark on learning to live as independent adults.

Fiscal Impact:

\$298,225 is budgeted for these specialized services in FY 2006/07: \$122,334 for ILP, \$65,000 for THPP and \$108,891 for THP-Plus. Funds for each of the specialized services programs are included in the FY 2007/08 County Budget request.

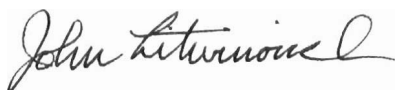
Net County Cost

No change in the net county cost.

Action to be Taken Following Approval:

Board Clerk to provide Department of Human Services, Social Services Division with a Minute Order reflecting Board action. Department will continue to provide effective ILP, THPP and THP-Plus services. Auditor/Controller will pay invoices for program expenditures that are within program guidelines and parameters established by the State of California and are approved by the Director of Human Services.

Sincerely,



John Litwinovich
Director of Human Services