

**Youth Transitions Advisory Council**

Meeting Summary

March 24, 2020

Tiffany Turnage

SaVone Cole

Sarah Mays

Jon Berestecky

Troy Jenkins

Christie Morris

Courtney Matthews

Janet Jenkins

Risa Roth

Jolene Sharp

Brandi Osborne

Gina Lynette,

Jas Snell

Ben Turner

Kristi Walts

Stephanie Athalone

Ginger Harris

Kendra Mitchell-

Darci Halfman

Wendy Jill Spence

Kylie Graves

Brent Robinson

Cheryl Paris

Karen Nichols

Chaney Cruze

Linda Copeland

Tijuana Miller

Susan Cope

Heather Tribble

Garmai Tokpah

Jacques Bonds

Steve Petty

Richard Kennedy

Dave Aguzzi

Bill Latimer

Crystal Hutchins

Kathy Robinson

Kim Peer

Matt Davis

Nathan Harmening

Danielle Rochelle

Cara Suvall

**Welcome and Introductions**

Richard Kennedy opened the meeting and welcomed the attendees. Kennedy asked participants to enter their names in the chat and provided notice that the meeting was going to be recorded. Steve Petty shared information from Tennessee Housing and Development Agency's Toni Shaw that Omnivision's Family Foundation had been awarded a grant to provide housing for transition age youth aging out of foster care in West Tennessee.

**Youth Villages YVLifeSet - Heather Tribble**

Tribble stated that LifeSet was currently serving 483 youth across Tennessee, in every county through its work with the Department of Children's Services (DCS). YVLifeSet provides Extension of Foster Care Services (EFCS) case management only for 152 of those youth. Youth Villages provides LifeSet to 213 youth. Youth receiving both EFCS case management and YVLifeSet in Tennessee numbered 118, An

additional 152 youth receive privately funded LifeSet services bringing the total served in Tennessee to 630 youth each day.

Since July 2021, Youth Villages has assisted DCS with making vendor payments for rental, child care or transportation assistance with Covid relief funds provided by the Federal government. This can include security deposits, rent, utility payments, child care, or automobile purchases and repairs or insurance. Youth Villages has received approximately 1350 referrals from DCS, Tribble provided examples of the youth assisted by Youth Villages by the vendor payments.

### **Office of Independent Living DCS - Courtney Mathews, Dave Aguzzi, Ginger Harris**

Mathews, Director, Office of Independent Living, shared that DCS has staff across the state serving youth aging out of foster care. Mathews stated that one of the Youth Transitions Advisory Council's recommendations, to expand eligibility to include youth who aged out of foster care who were working up to 80 hours per month or participating in activities leading to employment was included in the Governor's proposed budget and supporting legislation had been passed by the House today. It has already passed the Senate and awaits the Governor's signature. Funding will be included in the Appropriations bill when it is enacted. The planned implementation date will be January 1, 2023.

Legislation passed last year created a pilot program to support former foster care youth at state universities, community colleges and applied colleges of technology. Schools agreeing to participate include the University of Tennessee System, University of Memphis, East Tennessee State University, Nashville State, and Chattanooga State. The program will provide some liaisons on these campuses to assist youth receiving Education and Training vouchers, Bright Scholars, and Tennessee Foster Care Hope grants. DCS hopes to start the program this fall semester.

Discussions with TennCare BlueCare and DCS are also underway regarding another YTAC recommendation regarding youth aging out of foster care remaining on TennCare Select after leaving custody. Those discussions are on-going.

Youth up to age 21 continue to be eligible for Covid relief funds until September 30, 2022. A second social media campaign is planned for the summer in hopes of

spending all the federal funds. All other expansion criteria ended September 30, 2022,

Aguzzi, Deputy Director, Office of Independent Living, provided data on number of relief payments provided. DCS received 2166 applications for funds that were determined to be eligible according to the criteria. There were 1975 requests made for payment for a total of \$2,231,800. Only \$2,090,800 worth of those checks have been cashed due to transient nature of these youth.

<b>Stimulus Payment Applications</b>	
	<b># To 3/23/21</b>
Public/LifeSet Stimulus Applications	2166
EFCS Stimulus	496
Total Payment Requests	1975
Cost Encumbered	\$2,231,800.00
Cost Reconciled	\$2,090,800.00

TN Department of Children's Services

In Fiscal Year 2022, 739 youth have been served by EFCS during 753 episodes. There are currently 305 youth active in EFCS,

<b>EFCS Episodes to 2/28/2022</b>	
<b>EFCS Data Category</b>	<b># Served FY22</b>
Total EFCS Episodes	753
Total Young Adults Served	739
Total Active in EFCS	305

  

<b>EFCS Data Category</b>	<b># Served FY21</b>
Total EFCS Episodes	625
Total Young Adults Served	613
Total Active in EFCS	368

TN Department of Children's Services

Harris, Youth Engagement Coordinator, Office of Independent Living, reported that DCS plans to resume Independent Living Camps this summer. They are currently in

the process of planning a day camp this June 2022 and are also hoping to resume in-person camps later this year.

The Office of Independent Living continues to our work with the Young Adult Advisory Council (YAAC) by meeting bi-monthly via WebEx or conference calls. The Young Adult Advisory Council was instrumental in identifying the needs of young people during the pandemic, which resulted in the Pandemic Aid stimulus payments and direct vendor payments by Youth Villages. If EFC Expansion is approved, members of the Young Adult Advisory Council will be represented in implementation meetings.

Harris also reported that former Extension of Foster Care Youth have been identified to participate on Foster Parent Panels. DCS has been working closely with the DCS Foster Parent Training Coordinator to have young adults voice reasons why it is important to foster teenagers. During these panels, young adults have a chance to use their voice and express the importance of providing support to youth in Foster Care. The next panel will take place this month.

Sharp asked if the new legislation included extension of foster care services for youth with disabilities. Mathews responded that disabled youth were already included. Youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities are served by EFCS while awaiting transition to a ECF/Choices program. These youth also need to be receiving their Social Security Disability benefits.

### **Viable, Inc. - Ben Turner**

Turner introduced himself as President of a 501(c)3 public charity whose mission is to connect survivors of abuse with meaningful employment, Viable began serving trauma victims overseas and has in the last 18 months begun working with Middle Tennessee victims. Viable's goal is to find entry level or greater positions of employment within companies with a healthy workplace.

Viable seeks referrals for employees. They currently have more employers than workers to provide for them.

Kennedy asked what specific geographic area Viable served. Turner stated that were accepting referrals from Middle Tennessee and Chattanooga.

### **Resource Centers**

#### **Project Now! McNabb Center Knoxville- Christie Morris**

Morris reported that McNabb Center has opened some new programs. Street Outreach is for homeless youth ages 12 to 21, assisting them in getting services such as housing, state identification, food etc. McNabb has also opened a school program, Elevate, for youth with substance abuse and addiction issues. Project Now! continues working with youth on Opportunity Passport, cooking classes etc.

### **River City Youth Collective Partnership for Children and Families Chattanooga- Cheryl Paris and Stephanie Athalone**

Paris reported RCYC continues to work with youth on school completion. RCYC staff are providing trauma therapy for youth, at their home if necessary. Athalone reported working with youth on goal setting in January and in February worked with youth on healthy relationships. With warmer weather beginning, staff are starting yoga on "Mindful Monday's."

### **Youth Connections Monroe Harding Nashville - Chaney Cruz**

Cruz announced that Youth Connections was opening for in-person activities in April after two years of providing only virtual classes, Youth Connections has 11 HiSet Graduates so far this year. Graduation is scheduled for May 6. Fourteen young parents have enrolled in their new parenting class. Youth Connections continues to provide employment assistance through its "Works Wonders" program and Vanderbilt student nurses are offering health coaching for a second year. Two students have earned a veterinary assistant certificate and are currently in paid internships at the Pet Community Center. This summer, Youth Connections will offer a summer summit where all classes will be offered in a weeklong format.

### **South Memphis Alliance - Tijuana Miller**

Miller reported South Memphis Alliance (SMA) continues to provide its Opportunity Passport financial literacy classes, sexual health classes, Sister Saving Sisters, Brothers Saving Brothers, and life skills classes. They also are continuing to raise funds to support their programming for youth, holding bake sales, car washes, etc. In May, there will be a summer kick off during foster care awareness month with a girls' soccer game. A participant in SMA's "Will Work" program was in attendance. He makes tee shirts and received assistance getting his business license through "Will Work". The program aids completing G.E.D. or high school diploma, training or certification or entrepreneur skills.

### **Department of Health - Kendra Mitchell**

Mitchell reported part of her role with the Department of Health (DOH) was overseeing the contract with Family Voices and the Youth Advisory Council, assisting youth with special health care needs in advocating for their own health care needs. One of their needs is emergency preparedness and communicating their special needs to first responders during emergencies such as car accidents and natural disasters. The Department of Health has two initiatives to address these issues. The first is emergency alert decals and magnets that can be placed on the front window of their home or rear windshield of their automobile. Families are provided upon request receive both a decal and a magnet along with a tool kit to fill out that identifies the child and their needs along with what calming and communication techniques can be used in critical situations, The Department of Health is also training first responders on where the decals and magnets are located and where to find the information. The second intervention is emergency toolkits. The toolkits are backpacks. Inside the backpacks are flashlights, first aid kits, waterproof document folders, emergency checklists and resource cards with contact information for any agencies they might need to assist. Both of the toolkits are available from DOH upon request. Mitchell provided her contact information in the chat. [Kendra.T.Mitchell@tn.gov](mailto:Kendra.T.Mitchell@tn.gov).

### **Youth Homeless Demonstration Project - Jon Berestecky, Chambliss Center for Children**

Berestecky in addition to his work at Chambliss with transition age youth, serves as advisor to the Young Adult Action Board for the Chattanooga Regional Youth Homeless Coalition. He was joined by Jasmine, Chair of the Young Adult Action Board, made up of young adults who have lived experience with homelessness and other service involvement. The Youth Homeless Demonstration Project is funded by a \$2.2 million grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to serve youth aged 18 to 25. Jasmine reported that the board is finishing up the first draft of their community blueprint in collaboration with both state and local agencies. The plan will identify the types of housing programs they would like to see funded such as rapid re-housing, emergency transitional re-housing, host homes, etc. The funding will be made available in a competitive process with a variety of programs being provided by a variety of agencies. The Young Adult Action Board will be involved in determining what agencies receive funding and who is hired to provide those services. Four of the seven Young Adult Action Board members have gone through the Department of Mental Health and

Substance Abuse Services Certified Peer Support training to assist youth and young adults accessing housing services. The plan will be submitted to HUD in April.

**Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services Office of Children, Young Adults and Families -Steve Petty for Jessica Mullins, Director**

The Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (MHSAS) Office of Children, Young Adults and Families provides three programs serving transitions age youth: The Clinical High Risk for Psychosis Program (CHR-P) serves youth aged 18 to 25 in Shelby County who are at risk of developing psychosis. The grant ends September 30, 2022, but the MHSAS will request a no cost extension and has applied for a new grant to provide the service. Preliminary results show 0 conversions to psychosis, an increase in school enrollment, a decrease in crisis contact and an increase in client reports of doing well in social situations and being satisfied with their lives. The second program is the First Episode Psychosis Program (On Track TN) serving ages 15-30 who have experienced a first episode of psychosis within the past 2 years across the state recently adding three new sites in Montgomery, Rutherford, and Anderson Counties. Recent outcomes show a 69 percent reduction in hospitalizations for behavioral health reasons and improvements in all areas of functioning, including 59 percent increase in improvement of symptoms. A third program, Healthy Transitions, has 2 sites, the Mental Health Cooperative in Davidson County and Frontier Health in Greene County, serving youth and young adults ages 16-25 who have a mental health diagnosis or co-occurring disorder, including co-occurring intellectual and developmental disability. Recent outcomes show an increase in positive functioning in daily life, a decrease in psychological distress and use of illegal substances. The Healthy Transitions grant funds the Statewide Young Adult Leadership Council (YALC.) Healthy Transitions plans to hold a summit later this month, March 30 and 31. The department also provides training for the Certified Young Adult Peer Support Specialist Program (CYAPSS.)

Kennedy asked for a motion to approve the October 2023 Meeting Summary. Harris motioned to approve. Berestecky seconded the motion. There were no objections. Petty asked that if there were any corrections, please let him know.

Kennedy asked for further announcements. Lynette, Empower TN announced they would be providing their Youth Leadership Academy this summer for youth with disabilities. More information will be shared with the YTAC via email.

Kennedy announced that TCCY has an opening for the position of Director of the Youth Transitions Advisory Council. It will also be Director of the Council on Children's Mental Health and the Home Visiting Leadership Alliance. The position may be posted as early as today. It may be next week. If you are interested in applying for the position, please contact TCCY.

Kennedy asked members to provide feedback on the whether YTAC should meet in-person, continue to meet virtually or try some form of "hybrid" with some members attending in-person and others virtually.

Kennedy announced future meeting dates: June 23 meeting jointly with the Council on Children's Mental Health, August 11, and October 6. Locations and formats to be determined.

The meeting was adjourned.