

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
744 P Street, Sacramento, CA 95814



November 14, 2001

ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE NO. I-93-01

REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL

- State Law Change
 Federal Law or Regulation Change
 Court Order
 Clarification Requested by One or More Counties
 Initiated by CDSS

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
 ALL CHIEF PROBATION OFFICERS
 ALL GROUP HOME PROVIDERS
 ALL TRANSITIONAL HOUSING
 PLACEMENT PROGRAM PROVIDERS
 ALL FOSTER FAMILY AGENCIES
 ALL COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: FOSTER CARE

REFERENCE: ASSEMBLY BILL (AB) 427, (CHAPTER 125, STATUTES OF 2001)

The purpose of this Notice is to provide information on the recently enacted legislation, AB 427 (Chapter 125, Statutes of 2001). The following summary describes the major program components.

Supportive Transitional Emancipation Program (STEP)

The Supportive Transitional Emancipation Program (STEP) provides assistance payments to emancipated foster youth until their 21st birthday if they are participating in an educational or training program, or any activity consistent with their Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP).

- The STEP rate is equal to the basic foster care rate.
- Counties will be required to provide sixty-percent matching funds.
- Participation in STEP is a county option; counties who wish to participate in the current fiscal year will be required to file a Letter of Intent with the California Department of Social Services, Foster Care Services Bureau, by December 31, 2001.
- Youth receiving Kinship Guardianship Assistance Payments (Kin-GAP) are also eligible for the STEP when they emancipate.

Transitional Housing Placement Program (THPP) for youth in placement

The Transitional Housing Placement Program (THPP) is a Community Care licensed placement opportunity for youth in foster care. The goal of the THPP is to help participants emancipate successfully by providing a safe environment for youth to practice the skills learned in the Independent Living Program (ILP).

Participants may live alone, with departmental approval, 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 participants' TILPs, the case plan emancipation readiness document.

Eligibility -

- The age criteria for the Transitional Housing Placement Program (THPP) was lowered from 17 to 16 years old. The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) recommends that counties select, for participation, only those 16-year-old youth who are able to meet the challenges of living independently successfully.
- New language to the Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) 16522.1 (a) (1) specifies that THPP participation extends to eligible dependent youth who are wards of the court as described in WIC Section 602 and eligible dependent youth who receive psychotropic medications.

Rates -

- The Transitional Housing for Foster Youth Fund (hereinafter, the Fund) established in WIC Section 11403.4, allows THPP counties the option to increase the rates for THPP to seventy-five percent of the average Aid to Families with Dependent Children-Foster Care (AFDC-FC) group home rate paid by the county for foster youth 16 to 18 years of age. The non-federal portion of the increase will be shared by the state (at forty-percent) and counties (at sixty percent).
- If a county does not have group homes or youth in group home placement, their increased rate will be based on the lesser of the following: seventy-five percent of the regional average group home rate or the actual cost of the approved program. (The term "regional" means the County Welfare Directors Association's Child Welfare Regions. See attachment.)
- The CDSS will allow counties to base their increased rate upon their own information regarding the average group home rate the county pays for this age group. The CDSS will review the proposed rates for reasonableness. Counties will be required to submit documentation to support their proposed rate.
- Although not anticipated, should the Fund be depleted, counties will have the option of "rolling-back" to the THPP base rate approved as of June 30, 2001 or, with county only funds, pay the non-federal difference between the original THPP base rate and the new rate.
- If a county did not have an approved THPP base rate as of June 30, 2001 the state average grant for foster youth aged 16 and above as of June 30, 2001 may be used as a base rate. This amount is \$2,100.00.

- If the county THPP base rate approved as of June 30, 2001, was in excess of seventy-five percent of the county average group home rate payment or \$2,100.00, the county may continue operating their THPP at the higher rate.

Current THPP counties that want to increase their rate should submit an amendment to their THPP plan which includes a new budget, the amount of the proposed rate increase and supporting documentation indicating the county's average group home rate payment.

Types of housing -

- Language in the WIC 16522.1 (a) clarifies that housing available for the THPP may include single-family dwellings and condominiums.

Transitional Housing Programs for emancipated foster youth (THP+)

- Counties implementing the STEP, may opt to provide transitional housing programs (THP+) for STEP participants up to 21 years old.
- The rate for THP+ will be seventy percent of the average AFDC-FC group home rate paid by the county for youth 16 to 18 years old. The sharing ratio will be forty-percent state (from the Fund) and sixty-percent county funds.
- Providers of THP+ will apply for county certification rather than a CDSS license.
- Should a STEP participant choose to live in a THP + certified facility, the entire STEP payment will be paid to the THP+ provider to off-set a portion of the rate.
- Participants may remain in THP+ for a maximum of twenty-four cumulative months.

Greater detail on AB 427 including STEP and THP+ will be addressed in subsequent ACLs and/or Notices. If you have any questions concerning this letter, please contact Sonya St. Mary at (916) 445-7001, sonya.st.mary@dss.ca.gov or Chris Forté, Transitional Housing Coordinator, at (916) 327-8958, chris.forte@dss.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

***Original Document Signed
By Dave Dodds For***

SYLVIA PIZZINI
Deputy Director
Children and Family Services Division

CHILD WELFARE REGIONS

NORTHERN

Butte, Colusa, Del Norte, Glenn, Humboldt, Lake, Lassen, Modoc, Plumas, Shasta, Siskiyou, Tehama, Trinity.

BAY AREA

Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Mendocino, Monterey, Napa, San Benito, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Solano, Sonoma.

VALLEY MOUNTAIN

Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, Mono, Nevada, Placer, Sacramento, Sierra, Sutter, Tuolumne, Yolo, Yuba.

VALLEY

Fresno, Kings, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Tulare.

SOUTHERN

Imperial, Inyo, Kern, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Ventura.