

Best Practices in Transitional Housing: Beyond the Purple Umbrella Project



Welcome

Presenter:

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Learning Objectives

- Explore national and local statistical data related to the needs of emancipating youth
- Identify the needs of youth aging out of foster care
- Learn strategies to promote awareness and involve community partners in developing solutions
- Identify obstacles for youth in securing housing and strategies to help youth maintain and secure permanent housing

Original Project Goal

To improve our community's services in three areas: School Readiness, Youth Aging Out of Foster Care, and Alternative Placement Resources for Children in Summit County, as part of Summit County's 2010 project, an initiative designed to improve the overall quality of life for the residents of Summit County.

The Need for Our Task Force



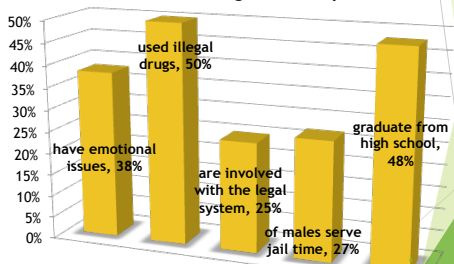
For Emergency Contact Information, one aged-out youth wrote on a job application.....

"Call 9-1-1." because he didn't have anyone else

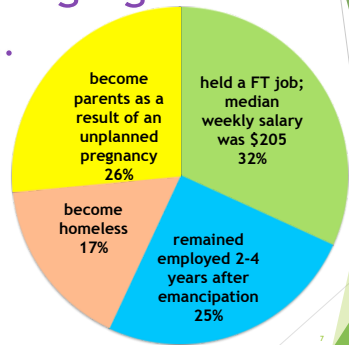
National Data

In the U.S., 30,000 youth aged-out of the public child welfare system each year.

Of the Aged-Out Population



After Aging Out...

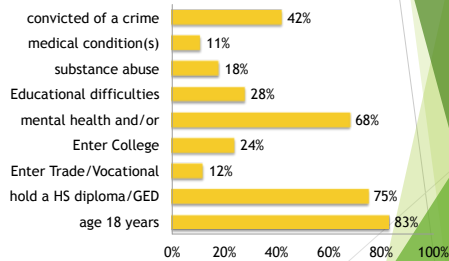


After Aging Out (continued)

- Less than 1 in 5 are completely self-supporting a year after emancipation.
- Less than 1 in 8 graduate from a four-year college.
- The Natl average age to leave home: 26
- Youth age-out of foster care: 18

Summit County Children Services (SCCS) Emancipated Data

Approximately 43 Youth age-out of SCCS care each year; 2015 = 34 Youth



Source: SCCS Focus Group with Aged-Out Youth, February 17, 2009, Akron, Ohio

What They Say...

- “Being on your own at 18 is very hard...”
- “When I was (in care) there was too much counseling. Now, when I need it, there are too many barriers...”
- “If I hadn’t had my son, I wouldn’t have qualified for anything.”
- “ I went to college orientation alone. The other kids had their parents with them..”

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Issues They Say They Face...

- Lack of affordable, adequate, stable housing
(At the time of the 2009 focus group, 56% in temporary housing, 6% homeless)
- Lack of affordable health/mental health care
- Difficulty accessing transportation
- Lack of food
- Lack of financial resources
- Lack of social supports
- Lack of access of community services

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What They Said They Need...

(their recommendations)

- Access to employment (livable wage)
- Health/mental health care and medication (now with Affordable HealthCare Act expanded coverage to 26)
- More housing options
- Access to affordable, stable housing
- Housing programs for those with felony convictions
- Minimize transportation barriers
- Access to community services
- Money management assistance
- Continued relationship with social workers
- Computer/internet access
- Mentoring program until age 25
- Programs for adults without children
- Option to stay in foster care until age 21

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How We Responded and Formed the Taskforce...

- Identified community partners
- Formally invited them to help
- Provided lunch
- Reviewed the statistics
- Created needs based sub-committees
- Began working
- Scheduled regular follow up meetings

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Transformation to Community Initiative “Summit-UP”

Summit County Children Services ran a successful youth emancipation task force/ Purple Umbrella Project from July 2009- December 2014.

In January 2015 the continued interest and community support lead the initiative into second phase known as Summit-UP. The scope broadened to include the needs of all unaccompanied youth in our community.

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Housing

- Summit County Children Services offers two Transitional Housing Programs providing 22, one-bedroom subsidized apartments for Emancipated Youth 18-25 (single only). The second program is currently funded through May 31, 2016 (not funded for 2017)
- The Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority approved preference eligibility for emancipating youth 18-21 which drastically reduced wait times for housing.
- Up to 50 units or vouchers are identified for emancipated youth in AMHA housing.



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Transitional Housing

- The transitional housing is funded through our local Continuum of Care(CoC).
 - Agencies throughout the state may reach out to their CoC to provide a similar transitional housing program to our homeless youths.
 - The CoC may be within the larger entitlement communities.
- OR*
- for rural areas, agencies may reach out to COHHIO for the balance of state application. HUD is encouraging programs targeting homeless youth.

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Creating a Partnership with the Housing Authority

- Secure the Executive Director/Director's Office "buy in" from Public Child Welfare Agency (PCWA) and Housing Authority (HA)
- Investigate funding for target population through housing choice vouchers (Family Unification Program)
- Evaluate other available community programs for youth (housing and services)
- Include Housing Authority staff responsible for admissions and occupancy policies and continued assistance in community initiatives /committees.

Items for Housing Authorities to Consider

Question:

What was the fastest way to get youth into housing

- Explore legal requirement of youth under 18 being placed on the wait list (Ohio law must be 18 years old)

Change the language in Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy (ACOP) to include wait list preference points?

- Public Child Welfare Agency (PCWA) to certify wait list applicants

Develop relationships and procedures with Housing Authority (HA) and PCWA.

- HA rigidly regulated - PCWA needs to work closely to learn procedures to help relay information to the emancipated youth, attend orientation/voucher issuance.
- Any changes in Housing Authority procedures for special populations needs to be formally addressed.

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Observations & Suggestions

1. Communication is a HUGE issue

- Consider offering Community Voice Mail, if available
- Consider social media, research possible confidentiality issues
- HA and PCWA needs to make immediate contact and build relationship with each emancipated youth
- Partnering agencies need to be willing to be adaptable but consistent with procedures/policies
- Need to understand emancipated youth's maturity level in relating housing requirements (following the rules)

2. HA needs to be proactive and responsive

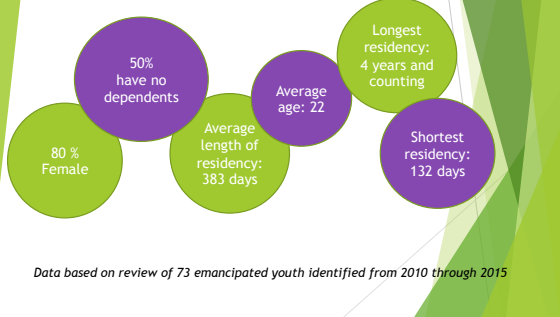
- Establish relationship early in the application process
- May need additional reminders of appointments, rules and resources
 - Example: Keys are key...for real!
- Being mindful that this is youths' first exposure to being on their own
 - Example: Youth living in middle class foster care being able to locate and set up housekeeping in an apartment of their own

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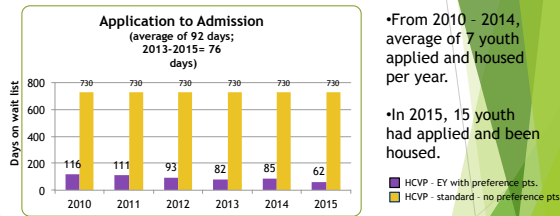
AMHA Emancipated Youth - Summary of Sample

- 73 emancipated youth identified from 2009 - present. (Solid data available from 2010 through 2015).
- 42 currently housed.
- As of July 1, 2015 emancipated youth that reach the age of 24 and have successfully maintained housing for 2 years are considered "graduated/completed" and EY designation removed.

AMHA Emancipated Youth Snapshot

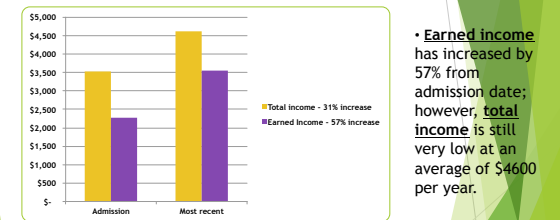


AMHA Emancipated Youth Admission Wait Time



Majority of youth are in the Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP) because Public Housing (PH) program has fewer one bedroom units available.

AMHA Emancipated Youth Increase in Income



Data from 2010 - 2015, AMHA Emancipated Youth records

AMHA Emancipated Youth End of Participation

Based on limited data available for the 73 emancipated youth identified

- 20% - cancellations due to eviction, termination, or family obligations
- 10% - Gave up subsidy, moved out (voluntary or over income)
- 5% - No follow through from client (never housed)
- <1% - Port

Outcomes to Measure

Current measurements

- Wait list to housed date
- Length of participation in housing
- Change in income over participation time
- Household composition

Future measurements

- Education
- Work History (from housed date to current)
- Outreach for programs, referrals for services (utility assistance, job search assistance; furniture voucher; Early Childhood Initiative; Section 3 registry)
- Review capacity to assist Emancipated Youth

Spicer Terrace

Opened May 2016



Residential 12-unit apartment complex with a supportive environment for young adults (18- under 25) that are **homeless** and **disabled**.

SERVICES:

- Academic Support
- Post Secondary Education Resources
- Budget and Financial Management
- Health Education
- Home Management
- Primary Care Services
- Counseling/Mental Health Services
- Case Management

CURRENT STATUS:

- 5 units leased, May 2 move-in
- 90 on waiting list, waiting on background checks
- Two tenants working, 1 enrolled in college, 1 in high school
- Currently couch surfing or in homeless shelter

Funding sources: Replacement Housing Factor Funds and Ohio Housing Finance Association

“Don’t let your past determine your future. You have a chance to change the outcome of your life.” - Joshua



One of 11 children.
Both parents abused drugs.
Entered foster care at age 6.

Currently, Joshua is working on his Associates Degree in Social Work at Stark State, estimated graduation date of December 2016. He would like to complete his Bachelors.

Employed at Akron General Hospital since 2014.

*Most Helpful -
“Being in the right place at the right time hooked me up with professionals who have continued to help me with independent living and self sufficiency.” - Joshua*

Thank you!

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