

**PRE & POST EMANCIPATED YOUTH:
IS CAMELOT STILL A DREAM?**

SUMMARY

Many children in Orange County live a storybook life. They enjoy one of the best environments in the world, filled with sun, fun and opportunity. They have a nurturing family environment and are secure in the knowledge that, should the need arise, a family member is there to assist them through difficult times. Unfortunately, there is also a segment of Orange County youth who are the "invisible minority." While they may live in Orange County, they do not enjoy the same benefits or lifestyle as other youth. They are the youth caught in the foster care, probation and Social Services institutional systems. These young men and women do not have the same nurturing opportunities as other youth in Orange County. They usually lack stable families to assist them in evolving into competent adults as they enter into adulthood and mainstream society. Many of these youth are from abusive families, have experienced multiple foster care placements or probation, and may be incarcerated. Due to their childhood history, many of these youth have the additional burden of overcoming social and mental health issues while trying to independently transition into a self-sufficient lifestyle. The odds of success are stacked heavily against them.

This report builds on previous Grand Jury reports in examining whether the opportunities provided to the "invisible minority" are improving or merely being documented without substantive changes being implemented. Often reports of this type are effectively sidelined while government goes on with business as usual. Meanwhile, the youthful clients continue to hope that someday they can escape the system and gain control of their lives when they emancipate. What they don't realize is that a much harder and dangerous life awaits them as they enter unprepared into society. Data suggests that many of the emancipated youth suffer homelessness, run-ins with the judicial system, drug use, and pregnancy. They struggle to get and keep jobs and are unprepared to run their lives without help. This was the case when the Grand Jury last reviewed this issue in a 1999/2000 report; the present report addresses the "where are we now" aspect. It appears that efforts by many dedicated people have finally reached the ears of policy makers and have resulted in a myriad of programs that provide the "invisible minority" with tools to assist them with the transition into adulthood and self-sufficiency. The 2006/07 Grand Jury determined that;

- Outcome data is difficult to obtain.
- Available reports do not present programs and outcomes together.
- It is difficult to determine what the total foster youth population is in any given program and what percentage is being served or served successfully.
- Youth do not have enough opportunity to exercise independent living skills prior to emancipation.
- Opportunities for youth to access pre and post emancipation housing are limited and regulations require review.
- The website for emancipated youth needs to be more user friendly.

REASON FOR INVESTIGATION

The 2006/2007 Grand Jury decided to study outcomes and the status of programs serving foster youth in Orange County, pre and post emancipation, since 2000. The genesis of this study was the 1999/2000 Grand Jury report titled "Orange County is No Camelot for Emancipated Youth." This report updates the "Camelot" report in examining whether any progress has been made since 2000

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in better serving the needs of foster care youth in Orange County. It is imperative that transitional programs are continued and enhanced in order to provide foster youth the best chance of success when they emancipate. The Grand Jury decided to continue focusing on this issue, in keeping with previous Grand Jury reports, due to the importance of the topic.

METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

This study derived its initial information through review of the 1999/2000 Grand Jury report "Orange County is No Camelot for Emancipating Youth". Additionally, the Grand Jury reviewed the December 2003 report "Housing And Service Needs Of Emancipating Youth In Orange County" from the Orange County Social Services Agency that was prepared by the California State University, Fullerton, Social Sciences Research Center (CSCC). These two documents provided the necessary background that led to the following research:

Interviews:

- Selected Health Care Agency staff;
- Selected Social Services Agency staff

Site Visits:

- San Pasqual Academy in San Diego County; and
- Orangewood Children's Home.

Reference Materials:

- Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment;
- Ansell-Casey "Connected by 25" program;
- Federal Register, Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, 45 CFR Part 1356 Chafee National Youth in Transition Database; Proposed Rule;
- California Department of Social Services, "Comments on the Proposed Rule for the Chafee National Youth in Transition Database;"
- California Foster Care Legislation Highlights, compiled March 2006;
- Orange County Proposition 63 Implementation Plan;
- California – County Independent Living Program Annual Report 2000/01;
- California – County Independent Living Program Annual Report 2003/04;
- California – County Independent Living Program Annual Report 2004/05; and
- California – County Independent Living Program Annual Report 2006.

Attended:

- Children and Families Commission of Orange County, February meeting; and
- Proposition 63 Mental Health Services Oversight & Accountability Commission meeting.

BACKGROUND AND FACTS

In years past, emancipating youth were given very little in the way of assistance after aging out of the foster care system. The statistics were grim, identifying large percentages of failure when these youth were released into society with a pat on the back and a nudge out the door. Once on their own some youth experienced periods of homelessness, run-ins with law enforcement and the judicial system, inability to find and keep work, pregnancy, and a general inability to function on their own. The main problem was a lack of preparation for emancipation. While the youth may have had a roof

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over their heads and a bed, prior to emancipation, they may not have received effective Independent Living Skills (ILS) training, which played a large part in post emancipation difficulties. ILS are things that youth need to master in order to succeed on their own. Some of these skills are:

- job interviewing;
- taking advantage of educational opportunities;
- understanding personal finances;
- finding and keeping housing;
- interpersonal skills; and
- health maintenance.

Independent Living Skills are the linchpin that holds the emancipation process together and allows youth to become successful adults. The setting in which the ILS services are delivered is also a consideration and seems to be a matter of debate. Relative care, foster care, group homes, and institutional care are all options for youth placement. Each venue has its own problems, e.g. relative care may pose a problem if the adults cannot effectively teach ILS, foster care may result in multiple placements, and group homes and institutional settings may exacerbate existing problems with the youth. Orange County has taken the position that congregate or institutional care is not a viable solution for foster youth. The County Social Services Agency believes that in-home care through parents, relatives, or foster care parents is much better than an institutional setting.

By contrast, San Diego County believes that there is a segment of the foster youth population that needs institutional care and is providing that alternative option through the San Pasqual Academy. Administrators at San Pasqual freely admit that this type of setting is not a “silver bullet,” but they believe it works very well for a certain portion of their foster youth population. Educational and ILS outcomes appear to support this belief in that a high percentage of youth leave the Academy with a high school diploma and usable ILS. The youth at San Pasqual live in buildings similar to apartments with several bedrooms in each apartment. They have a kitchen area, living room, and multiple bedrooms. Youth are assigned two to a bedroom and are expected to share in the responsibilities of upkeep and cooking. They cook two meals in the apartment and have lunch in the cafeteria between classes. Through this type of setting the youth practice ILS on a daily basis. Additionally, they are allowed off-campus activities which allow them some measure of independence.

Orange County provides ILS on Tuesday and Thursday evenings and Saturday mornings, through a series of 130 workshops throughout the year. The youth must travel to these workshops unless they are provided at an institution where they reside, such as the Youth Guidance Center or juvenile camps. Once a year a skills day is offered where the youth can practice the skills they have learned through the workshops. Attendance problems may arise if caregivers are unable to provide transportation for the youth to the workshops and/or skills day. Orange County Transportation Authority [OCTA] bus passes are provided and arguably this provides youth the opportunity to learn and exercise public transportation skills. Utilization of the bus pass can be a problem if the youth or the workshop site is not located near bus stops. It is an even bigger problem for a female traveling alone in the evening. The fact remains that youth may not be getting the necessary exposure and ability to exercise ILS prior to emancipation. Most people can agree that learning ILS and attaining a high school diploma are critical to entering adulthood and getting and keeping employment. Youth who emancipate with weak ILS are vulnerable to failure and it is critically important that a safety net of services is available to assist them through difficult times. Accessibility and knowledge of available services become paramount to youth who may be struggling after emancipation. Information regarding services that are available to emancipated youth is provided in the ILS workshops and in a notebook given to the youth when they emancipate. In addition, the county has developed an informational website for youth to access for assistance

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(<http://www.ssa.ocgov.com/youth/default.asp>).

A deficit in emancipating youth ILS was identified years ago; however, funding and specific programs to address the problem were not forthcoming. In Orange County, a disconnected array of services was implemented in a piecemeal fashion among public and private providers. This led to an ineffective utilization of available funds and duplication of some services and lack of others. There was no central coordinating entity to assist providers and caregivers in understanding who was doing what for foster youth in the county. Over the last two decades, especially since 1998, federal, state, and local legislation has been enacted into law and has chipped away at these problems. Inequitable funding allocations from the state continue to be an impediment to the effective implementation of programs. Orange County is a donor county, which means it pays more to the state than it receives back and as such does not receive the funding required to operate programs at the level necessary based on need in the county. Even with the improvements to emancipation programs, the question still remains: Are the emancipating youth doing better? Has statistical outcome data improved, remained the same, or worsened? More importantly, does valid data even exist?

A consideration that may impede data collection is whether the county can reasonably be expected to help and track outcomes for the entire spectrum of foster youth pre and post emancipation given the array of issues and available resources in Orange County. Behavioral problems, incarceration, probation, special education, mental illness, and violent backgrounds including being molested or raped are some of the issues caregivers and the youth alike must deal with prior to emancipation, thereby exacerbating an already difficult job. Programs and other assistance are useless if the youths refuse or are incapable of assimilating and putting the information to use, or if they refuse to submit information on how they are doing post-emancipation. Many youth become lost in society and prefer to sever all ties with county agencies in the post emancipation phase. It becomes very difficult if not impossible to track this segment of youth and determine outcomes. However, social service providers should view these deficiencies as challenges to be overcome, not as permanent barriers to assisting youth and obtaining outcome data.

Foster youth require several categories of support as they prepare for emancipation and continuing support after emancipation. The following is a general listing of services required.

Pre-emancipation youth require:

- Independent Living Skills training;
- transportation assistance (bus passes, driver training, etc.);
- educational tracking and assistance;
- job training and placement; and
- transitional housing (THPP).

Emancipated youth require:

- Job placement assistance;
- housing assistance;
- medical insurance;
- financial assistance;
- transportation assistance; and
- at least one adult role model in their lives.

Emancipated youth may need some or all of the services listed above depending on their specific circumstances. Some youth stay with family or foster parents, while others may have to survive on

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their own, requiring more supportive interventions.

The Orange County Social Services Agency Children and Family Services Department provided the following information identifying what services were available and what was proposed, deleted or downsized at three points in time: 2000, 2003, and 2007. These data provide part of the basis for this report in that they show whether or not improvements have been made to the delivery of services to transitional and emancipated youth over time. However, the data do not identify client outcomes, which are critical to determining whether the programs are actually beneficial for emancipated youth.

Transitional Housing (Pre-emancipation)

The Transitional Housing Placement Program (THPP) provides housing for pre-emancipated youth based on the youth meeting certain criteria. The youth must have shown a measure of responsibility and an ability to live relatively independently. THPP allows youth to exercise ILS prior to actually emancipating. The youth have rent subsidies and are monitored by adults who also live in the housing complex.

Effective January 1, 1999, all counties were eligible to submit proposals to participate in THPP. Orange County Social Services Agency submitted a proposal in 2000. By 2003 Orange County had established the first THPP contract with Olive Crest, who subsequently opened apartment clusters at two separate locations in Tustin. Each site could accommodate 10 youth. Two additional organizations were in the process of submitting plans for THPP services in Orange County. Currently, the Olive Crest THPP apartments have been narrowed to one complex, as California Department of Social Services (CDSS) has capped Orange County's participation at 20 beds for FY 06/07. In anticipation of CDSS allowing Orange County to expand the authorized maximum number of THPP beds, there are three additional community providers awaiting approval for establishing additional beds starting FY 07/08.

Transitional Housing (Post-emancipation)

As of 2000, the Orangewood Children's Foundation (OCF), in collaboration with the Mariners Church and some investors, developed a transitional housing program for emancipated youth called Rising Tide Joint Venture. At that time the following organizations had beds available for emancipating youth;

- Ladders To Success-shelter for the homeless (15 beds)
- Wise Place-Hotel for Women YWCA (6 beds)
- Stepping Stones- Florence Crittenden (12 beds)
- Rising Tide – OCF (19 beds) - OCF had planned to increase capacity to serve 120 youth.
- First Steps – YWCA (10 beds)

OCF employed a full-time housing consultant whose responsibilities included working with various community housing organizations, listing current housing resources, assessing housing needs, analyzing transitional housing programs in surrounding counties, and developing a five-year transitional housing plan which forecasted housing needs. In addition, HUD initiated a SuperNOFA (Notice of Available Funds) process to award funds for homeless assistance. Youth aging out of foster care fell within the definition of homeless and became eligible for these funds.

As of 2003, the Rising Tide Joint Venture had two apartment complexes, where nine apartments at each location were subsidized by the rest of the tenants. A maximum of 18 emancipated youths were located at each complex. The maximum duration for each youth was 18 months. In total, by 2003, there were 60 beds available in Orange County community organizations for emancipated youths.

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The growth of the Rising Tide program added an additional 18 beds. Also, in collaboration with Orange County Housing and Community Development Agency (OCHCDA) and the Santa Ana Housing Authority (SAHA), a pilot project was being finalized for a projected seven U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) housing allocations for emancipated youths. The housing slots were to be allocated to youths referred and supported by the Emancipation Services Program Senior Social Workers. Unfortunately, increases in Worker's Compensation Insurance requirements caused the closing of the 12 beds at the Stepping Stones facility.

Also in 2003, Emancipation Services Program's Independent Living Coaches (ILCs) contract with OCF supported the emancipated youth on an individual basis in their efforts to secure transitional housing (ILC's work one-on-one with the youths). Collaboration among the Orange County community providers of transitional housing was coordinated in conjunction with the meetings with OC housing authorities developing HUD housing allocations for emancipated youth.

Currently in 2007, Rising Tide continues to select emancipated youth for their two apartment complexes. Following a financial restructuring of the Rising Tide facilities and the establishment of a new administrator, the availability of beds to emancipated youth dropped. The current population is at 22 emancipated youth. The collaboration with OCHCDA, SAHA, and SSA continues. A total of 10 beds has been approved for this project. Since the actual availability of the emancipation beds is contingent on existing Family Unification Program HUD voucher recipients forfeiting or failing to qualify for continuing in this program, there are only three beds currently occupied by emancipated youths. Connection House has made eight beds available. The community-based organizations are currently providing 63 beds for emancipated foster youths, with duration of placement ranging from 6 to 18 months.

The supervisor of the ILC's contract continues to orchestrate the linkages to housing for emancipated youths. The Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Full Service Transitional Age Youth providers also assist in creating housing for eligible emancipated youths. The monthly CSCC Emancipation Services Subcommittee meetings with community partners and other County agencies make this information available to all participants.

Emancipated Youth History

By 2003, in compliance with AB 686 and Welfare and Institutions Code 391, SSA provided a comprehensive letter to all foster youth at the time of emancipation (this service was not available in 2000). This letter describes the circumstances under which the youths were removed from parental care and control, their placement, education, and medical and psychiatric histories. Emancipation Services Program provides these emancipating youth with a binder filled with current community resources, birth certificate, and social security documents. Currently, these binders continue to be prepared for emancipating youth. The Senior Social Workers assigned to this task also track the plans of emancipating youths as they leave the system in the outcome areas of post-secondary education, employment, emancipated housing plans, knowledge of health and behavioral health service providers, and other community resources.

Outreach

As of 2003, the Emancipated Services Program had developed informational material for the SSA Intranet and the internet to assist social workers. This was designed to assist agencies supporting Orange County youths in other counties and the general public with awareness of services available to foster and emancipated youths. The internet information was under construction and was supposed to be posted at <http://www.oc4kids.com>. This type of outreach was not available in

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2000. By 2007 the SSA had enhanced its internet site, providing contact information for educational, scholarship, employment, apprenticeships, health and behavioral health, and other services. The links from all the previous stand-alone internet sites were incorporated. The new SSA internet site is <http://www.ssa.ocgov.com/youth/default.asp>. The Grand Jury reviewed this website and felt it could be revised to be more user friendly for the foster youth.

Education

In 2000 Orange County received a grant from Collaborative Options for Resource Efficacy (CORE). This Foster Youth Service grant assisted any youth in Orange County group homes. SSA partnered with the Department of Education, Mental Health, and probation to administer the grant. In 2003 CORE had resumed the name Foster Youth Services (FYS). Under a contract with the Orange County Department of Education (OCDE), all foster youths placed in group homes were referred to FYS for updated information on school assignment, grade level, and credits achieved. Education data from this project was received for 85% of all foster youths five years of age and older, and entered into each youth's Health and Education Passport. This data consists of school attendance, credits achieved toward high school graduation, and current competency levels in reading and math skills. This program has continued into 2007.

Academic assessments were not available to foster youth in 2000. However, by 2003, under a separate contract with OCDE, SSA was referring all foster youths, regardless of placement type, to OCDE for semi-annual updates from school counselors. The reports identify credits obtained, reading skill level, math skill level, and recommendations for interventions that assist youths in graduating by the time of their emancipation. The contract with OCDE has continued into 2007 and all foster youths 14 and older are being tracked for math and reading competency, courses and grades completed each semester, and progress toward timely high school graduation. Special assistance is provided to the foster youths through contacts with the Assembly Bill 490 Foster Care Liaisons in each of the 28 school districts in Orange County. There is a pending plan to co-locate FYS staff with the Children and Family Services Division of SSA to facilitate the automatic entry of the academic progress information. Under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with OCF, SSA in 2003 provided referrals of foster youth for the "Bridges to Higher Education" project, and updated academic progress reports. In this project, 120 foster youths were to receive academic enrichment activities, workshops and some tutoring services. The project was pending approval to expand its services down to foster youths in kindergarten through high school graduation. It is anticipated that the Orange County Board of Supervisors will approve this new MOU by the beginning of FY 2007/08.

In July 2003, Senior Social Workers and Deputy Probation Officers began referring foster youths to the 68 Orange County schools and the 131 schools in adjacent counties participating in the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program. This program targeted youths that came from families where no one had graduated from a university. It provided paid tutoring and enrichment activities to prepare youths for success in university studies. This program is still operating in 2007 and foster youths who are both Dependent and Wards of the Court are encouraged to apply.

In September 2003, SSA began tutoring services at Family Resource Centers through collaboration with local universities' Services Learning programs. Beginning with the fall 2003 semester, the University Learning Center at California State University, Fullerton (CSUF) agreed to a tutoring collaboration with Emancipation Services Program (ESP). The college students providing the tutoring are trained and supervised by University staff, and receive compensation through the federal work-study program. They provide dial-up online tutoring in specific coursework for foster

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and emancipated youths attending high school, college, and some vocational courses anywhere in the county. As of 2007, the Friendly Center in Orange and the Family Resource Centers in Santa Ana continue to provide tutoring services for foster youths residing in their areas. CSUF's Learning Center continues to provide free tutoring services for foster youths, both at the centers and through distance learning, where both the youth and the tutor are logged on to the document being reviewed at the same time.

Transportation

In 2000 bus passes were issued to all foster care youth aged 16 to 21 in support of their education, vocational training, and employment transportation needs. By 2003 the process was coordinated among all SSA programs and with all community partners to avoid duplication of services. More eligible youths were identified and served, while reducing by about one half the monthly cost of bus passes. Currently, monthly swipe cards are issued for both local bus use, and for those foster and emancipated youths residing in other counties. This service facilitates transportation to school and employment responsibilities. Coordination of the distribution of the bus passes among Probation, SSA and community partners continues.

Vocational Education

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) provides the framework for a unique national workforce preparation and employment system designed to meet both the needs of the nation's businesses and the needs of job seekers, and those who want to further their careers. Workforce Investment Boards (WIB's) are part of the national WIA framework. Each state establishes both state and local WIBs in partnership with local elected officials, to plan and oversee the local Workforce Investment System described under WIA.

In 2000, the revised Department of Labor Welfare-to-Work regulations included youths aged 18 to 24 as part of the population eligible for benefits, if they were recipients of Foster Care before age 18. Welfare-to-Work grants were issued to California in 2003/04, and \$68 million was distributed to California's WIBs. Collaboration with the WIBs sought \$60,000 in seed funding for training 40 staff as Trainers of Youth Leadership workshops, thereby providing the resources to train up to 6,000 youth served by SSA, Probation, and the Youth Councils of the three WIBs in Orange County. In 2007 the collaboration on grants from the Department of Labor continues with the three WIBs. SSA, Probation and the Orange County WIB have submitted a proposal seeking \$300,000 for job training services to foster youths aged 17.5 years and older.

In 2000 a contract was established between SSA and Foster Assessment Center and Testing Service (FACTS). FACTS provides vocational and career assessment to ILP youths ages 16 to 19 and provides a report of the results to CFS staff. In June of FY 2003/04 SSA signed a new contract with FACTS. ESP doubled the number of youth referred for vocational assessments each month. An average of 32 youths were assessed every month. In 2007 contract services for vocational assessments continue through FACTS. Foster and emancipated youths between the ages of 16 and 21 are assessed through this half-day process, and career paths readily available in Orange County are matched with the skills of the youth.

OCF's Business Mentoring Program is funded through a contract with SSA. In 2000 the program provided youths ages 16 to 21 with part-time and full-time jobs and mentors to assist them in achieving success on the job and planning for their future. By 2003 the business mentoring services in the previous contracts with OCF were folded into the ILCs' functions with the youth. As of 2007 the ILC contract continues providing services to foster and emancipated youths until their 21st birthday. An average of 175 youths are served through this program each year.

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Independent Living Skills

In 2000 youths ages 18 to 21 could receive services including referral to community resources for counseling, job development, substance abuse treatment, college information, and information packets with lists of local resources for food, housing, etc. Also, OCF conducted transitional interviews and provided on-site training in group homes to youths and group home staff related to ILP.

In 2003, SSA provided Training for Trainers instruction to 46 foster care providers, social workers, probation officers, and other community staff on the use of the Ansell-Casey Family Program. These materials are designed to support development of life skills in foster youths. The program's "Ready, Set, Fly" booklets were distributed to foster care providers to assist them in "catching the youth in a teachable moment." The care providers and contract agencies were instructed in the use of the Casey online assessment tool available at www.caseylifeskills.org. Currently, the Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment [ACLSA] is being used with all foster youths as a standard assessment tool in Orange County by all contract providers and relative foster care providers. A drawback to ACLSA is that the youth must put in a county identifier code. Without doing this the data the youth input become lost in the system and uncollectible for analysis by Orange County.

Financial

As of 2000, the financial assistance to foster youths included work-related expenses, tutorial services, crisis counseling, emergency services and funds for education and training. In 2003, the SSA ILP Workshops, Seminars, and Special Events contract supported, in part, the administration of the OCF Children's Trust Fund. These funds could be used for school incidentals as well as driver's education and training. Currently, the Children's Trust Fund [CTF] continues to be funded, in part, by CDSS Emancipated Youth Stipend funding of \$74,500 for this fiscal year and donations to OCF which administers the funds. Foster youths could receive up to \$250 each year for school incidentals and emancipation activities. Emancipated youth could receive up to \$1000 from the CTF.

Emancipation Services

Emancipation Planning Conferences were being scheduled, in 2003, for all youth being referred by their case-carrying social workers. Nineteen such conferences were held and 14 more were pending at the time. ESP was encouraging the referral of youth beginning at age 16.5 to facilitate reunification with biological parents or extended family members if possible, as well as long term emancipation planning. In 2007 Emancipation Planning Conferences continue to be scheduled for all youth aged 14 years and older through referrals by case-carrying social workers. The younger youths' sessions focus on education issues and creating family connections. The older youth are focused on employment, post-secondary education, and housing planning. Family conferences are also being facilitated to sustain the relationships with relatives found through family search efforts. These services were not available in 2000.

Mentoring

A contract with OCF for Independent Living Coaches [ILCs] was established in July 2002. The ILCs provided long-term face-to-face coaching to the youth each month. The sessions engaged the youth in all of the emancipation services available through SSA contracts and in the community. There were 145 youths that had no other significant adult in their lives who were receiving services in Orange County. As of 2007 the ILC's contract continues providing services to foster and emancipated youths until their 21st birthday. An average of 175 youths are served through this program each year. ILP Senior Social Workers currently serve an additional 50 more challenging youths through a parallel process. These services were not available in 2000.

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In 2003, as a partner to the AmeriCorps Foster Youth Mentor Project at Santa Ana College, Emancipation Services Program social workers provided mentoring training to college students who supported 28 foster youth in their efforts to identify career goals and to shape their education to make themselves capable of accomplishing those goals. Services of this type were not available in 2000. In 2006 a Mentorship program agreement was added through Santiago Canyon College, which served an additional 60 foster youths. The Foster Youth Mentorship program continues into 2007 and provides mentors for up to 40 foster youths each year.

Other Services

Creating Family Connections was established as a pilot project under a MOU with Canyon Acres in August 2004, wherein 29 foster youths were connected with previously unknown extended family members. Orange County joined 13 other counties in the California Permanency for Youth Project in July 2005. There are currently 248 foster youths and 6 emancipated youths being served by this project. Beginning in April 2007, SSA will apply the principles of family finding and engagement services to all foster youth, starting with their detention by SSA Emergency Response investigators.

In FY 2007/2008 Orange County has been invited to join the five existing counties in the California Connected by 25 Initiative [CC25I]. This initiative focuses on achieving connectivity by age 25 in the five domains of post-secondary education, employment advances to sustain a living wage, health and behavioral health, financial knowledge and matched Individual Development Accounts, and finally, Permanency connections with extended family members. Focus groups are currently in progress to develop a Self-Assessment that will qualify Orange County for the Efforts To Outcomes database and participation in the CC25I project.

Architectural plans are in final stages for the development in 2008 of the Tustin Family Campus at the former Tustin Marine Corps Air Station. One of the components of that campus will be Transitional Housing Program-PLUS [THP+], now funded for FY 2006/2007 at 100% by CDSS. Orange County also plans two other THP+ components, including a Host Family format which is hoped to be in place in April 2007, and a Scatter-site Apartment format which will go out to Request For Proposal [RFP] in July 2007 when funding is confirmed.

The Fullerton Report, a 2003 research program funded by the Social Services Agency and conducted by California State University, Fullerton [Fullerton Report], identified the following recommendations as a result of interviews with pre - and post-emancipation youth and employees of nine Orange County agencies that provide services to emancipating youths:

Housing Needs and Preferences

1. Develop a "continuum of care" model of housing options.
2. Provide more outreach and training geared to licensed foster care providers and relative care providers regarding post emancipation transitional housing options.
3. Expand the development of affordable housing opportunities in the County (transitional, permanent, and alternative arrangements) that are targeted to youths emancipating from foster care particularly for youths with special needs.
4. Provide youths with more assistance finding housing.
5. Help youths deal with the "realities" of returning to live with parents or other family members.
6. Establish programs that continue to assist youths with their relationships with relatives after they emancipate.
7. Make housing vouchers more readily available to youths.

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8. Consider changes to the screening process and criteria for living in transitional housing programs.
9. Develop programs that focus on the relationship and personal skills that support success in maintaining housing.

Education, Training, and Employment

1. Make greater efforts to address the educational needs of foster youths at an earlier age, in order to assist youths in meeting their educational aspirations.
2. Develop programs that promote literacy.
3. Provide greater consistency in school experiences by reducing school changes and gaps in attendance.
4. Provide more assistance with college preparation and understanding college entry standards.
5. Help connect youths with resources that will support them in attending and completing college.
6. Develop more programs that provide basic orientation, skills development, and social support to connect youths to post secondary education and employment.
7. Develop more employment training and opportunities for youths to gain work experience.
8. Increase the availability of employment services.
9. Develop job retention services.
10. Consider changes in group home policies that would allow more youth to work.
11. Explore options that would allow more emancipating youths to obtain driver's licenses, insurance, and cars.
12. Consider the proximity to public transportation when planning new transitional housing programs and other services.
13. Develop programs that assist post-emancipated youths in obtaining insurance and financing the purchase of automobiles.

Preparation For Independent Living

1. Develop a curriculum of life skills training workshops that provide relevant, up-to-date content and more "hands on" practical application.
2. Involve youths in planning an individually-designed schedule of workshops and opportunities for practical experience rather than expect youth to select workshops in a piecemeal or "one-size-fits-all" fashion.
3. Begin preparation for independent living earlier.
4. Train and support care providers and youths in using the Ansell-Casey Assessment as a tool for better screening and tracking of youth's progress in developing independent living skills.
5. Provide more outreach to foster parents and relative caregivers about the importance of ILP workshops for youths in foster homes or relative care.
6. Increase the coordination of efforts between SSA and contractors to ensure that ILP workshops and services meet the needs of youth.

Service Needs Of Emancipating Youths.

1. Ensure that services are matched to the individual needs of the youths.
2. Develop aftercare services that are co-located and youth friendly.
3. Regionalize the distribution of services.
4. Find ways to engage youth in the services that they currently see as less desirable.

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5. Improve coordination among providers to give youth a more seamless delivery of aftercare services.
6. Make a greater effort to ensure that youths are aware of the range of services that they are eligible for after leaving County care.
7. Locate and utilize more community resources as young adults age out of after care services.

Personal Relationships, Adjustment Issues, and Personal Obstacles to Successful Independent Living.

1. Ensure that every youth has a supportive adult in his/her life.
2. Find ways to improve the quality of youths’ relationships with biological family after leaving County care.
3. Explore ways to build one-on-one relationships with former foster parents.
4. Help maintain supportive relationships that have been established prior to emancipating.
5. Ensure youth have access to counseling and other sources of support in times of crisis.

These recommendations from the Fullerton Report were a roadmap for developing and implementing change based on the programmatic needs and ILS deficiencies that were identified in 2003. The development of an annual report card with program and outcome data tied to the recommendations would enhance progress and accountability. However, from the data provided to the Grand Jury it does not appear that this has been done. The following table shows the outcome data collected by Orange County and submitted to the state, for foster youth over multiple years:

QUESTION	FY 2000/01	FY 2003/04	FY 2004/05	FY 2005/06
How many foster/probation youth who were wards/dependents of your county were eligible for ILP participation during the fiscal year?	Not Reported	2404	1653	2875
How many youth were discharged from foster/probation during the reporting period?	246	463	339	291
How many youth received aftercare services during the reporting period?	157	1477	649	644
How many youth in question 1 are counted in question 2?	157	423	264	232
How many youth discharged from foster/probation or receiving aftercare services during the reporting period:	(a) Services provided, statistics unavailable.	(a) 182	(a) 85	(a) 68
(a) Were employed full-time?	(b) Services provided, statistics unavailable.	(b) 299	(b) 243	(b)241
(b) Were employed part-time?	(c) Services provided, statistics unavailable.	(c) 60	(c) 54	(c) 31
(c) Were not employed?	(d) Services provided, statistics unavailable.	(d) 330	(d) 420	(d)486
(d) Were enrolled in school?	(e) Services provided, statistics unavailable.	(e) 481	(e) 395	(e)349
(e) Held a job, apprenticeship, internship, etc. for at least 3 consecutive months?				

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Besides money acquired from employment, how many youth discharged from foster/ probation or receiving aftercare services during the reporting period: (a) Received SSI funds? (b) Received scholarship funds? (c) Received stipend funds? (d) Received TANF funds? (e) Received support from family or spouse? (f) Received Chafee room and board? (g) Received other funds?	(a) Services provided, statistics unavailable. (b) 134 (c) 252 (d) Services provided, statistics unavailable. (e) Services provided, statistics unavailable. (f) 96 (g) Services provided, statistics unavailable	(a) 59 (b) 219 (c) 126 (d) Unknown (e) 86 (f) 47 (g) 356	(a) 35 (b)207 (c)170 (d)212 (e)298 (f) 44 (g)213	(a) 26 (b)328 (c)118 (d)232 (e)252 (f) 0 (g)217
How many youth discharged from foster/probation or receiving aftercare services during the reporting period: (a) Had a personal savings account? (b) Had an emancipation savings account?	(a) At least 30 (b) 827	(a) 14 (b) 356	(a) 14 (b) 213	(a) 0 (b)217
How many youth discharged from foster/probation or receiving aftercare services during the reporting period reported that they had experienced a period of time when they did not have enough money to buy food?	132	4	0	0
How many youth discharged from foster/probation or receiving aftercare services during the reporting period: (a) Lived with family members or relatives for at least 9 of the past 12 months? (b) Lived in their own housing (by themselves, with a spouse or roommate, in supervised independent living, or in a college dormitory) for at least 9 of the past 12 months? (c) Had ever felt unsafe in their home or neighborhood while living in a. or b.?	(a) Services provided, statistics unavailable. (b) Services provided, statistics unavailable. (c) Services provided, statistics unavailable.	(a) 193 (b) 195 (c) 4	(a) 296 (b) 246 (c) 0	(a)252 (b)294 (c) 0
How many youth discharged from foster/probation or receiving aftercare services during the reporting period reported that they had had no place to sleep or had to sleep in a shelter for at least one night during the reporting period?	Services provided, statistics unavailable.	4	5	8

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How many youth discharged from foster/probation or receiving aftercare services during the reporting period, during or prior to the reporting period:	(a) Services provided, statistics unavailable.	(a) 183	(a) 144	(a)200
(a) Received a high school diploma?	(b) Services provided, statistics unavailable.	(b) 2	(b) 4	(b) 16
(b) Received a General Equivalency Diploma (GED)?	(c) Services provided, statistics unavailable.	(c) Unknown	(c) 1	(c) 3
(c) Received an Associate of Arts degree (AA)?	(d) Services provided, statistics unavailable.	(d) Unknown	(d) 5	(d) 23
(d) Received a Bachelor of Arts degree (BA)?	(e) Services provided, statistics unavailable.	(e) Unknown	(e) 6	(e) 2
(e) Received a vocational certificate or license?				
How many youth discharged from foster/probation or receiving aftercare services during the reporting period:	(a) Services provided, statistics unavailable.	(a) 378	(a) 308	(a)293
(a) Were enrolled in high school?	(b) Services provided, statistics unavailable.	(b) 326	(b) 420	(b)486
(b) Enrolled in a post-high school vocational training or college?	(c) Services provided, statistics unavailable.	(c) 219	(c) 420	(c) 486
© Had all passing grades on their most recent report cards?				
How many youth discharged from foster/probation or receiving aftercare services during the reporting period reported at least one adult in the community that they could go to for:				
(a) Emotional support?	(a) 157	(a) 187	(a) 226	(a)243
(b) Job/school advice or guidance?	(b) 157	(b) 255	(b) 226	(b)243
How many youth discharged from foster/probation or receiving aftercare services during the reporting period were known to have used illegal drugs during the reporting period?	Services provided, statistics unavailable.	20	11	1
How many youth discharged from foster/probation or receiving aftercare services during the reporting period had been incarcerated during the reporting period?	Services provided, statistics unavailable.	25	19	13
How many youth discharged from foster/probation or receiving aftercare services during the reporting period were parents?	Services provided, statistics unavailable.	189	89	70

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How many youth discharged from foster/probation or receiving aftercare services during the reporting period received health/mental health records at the time of discharge from foster care?	69 youth (since Orange County began distributing packets on 03/28/02).	463	339	291
How many youth discharged from foster/probation or receiving aftercare services during the reporting period had health insurance during the entire reporting period?	232	167	212	232
How many youth discharged from foster/probation or receiving aftercare services during the reporting period who require ongoing medication for maintenance of physical or medical health, reported that they knew how to access resources to continue receiving their medications?	All youth needing such assistance were coached on these issues.	11	4	26

Transitional Housing Placement Program (THPP)/THP-Plus

Question	FY 2003/04		FY 2004/05		FY 2006	
	THPP	THP+	THPP	THP+	THPP	THP+
How many youth, for whom your county has jurisdiction, participated in THPP/THP-Plus during the reporting period either in your county or in another county?	28	N/A	33	0	33	0
Does your county have a Department approved THPP/THP-Plus plan?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Not Asked	Not Asked
How many licensed THPP/THP-Plus providers are in your county?	1	0	1	0	Not Asked	Not Asked
How many THPP/THP-Plus participants during the reporting period held a job, apprenticeship, etc. for at least 3 consecutive months?	23		29		18	0
How many THPP/THP-Plus participants during the reporting period: Were enrolled in high school? Received a high school diploma or GED?	28 20		30 17	0 0	23 9	0 0
How many THPP/THP-Plus participants during the reporting period were parents whose child/children lived with the participant?	0		3	0	1	0

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<p>How many youth (former THPP/THP+ participants) participated in THPP/THP+ during:</p> <p>2002-2003 FY? 2003-2004 FY? 2004-2005 FY? 2005-2006 FY?</p>	<p>THPP only</p> <p>20 28 33 23</p>
<p>How many former THPP/THP+ participants were enrolled in high school during the reporting period?</p> <p>2002-2003 FY? 2003-2004? 2004-2005? 2005-2006?</p>	<p>THPP only</p> <p>20 24 31 23</p>
<p>How many former THPP/THP+ participants received a high school diploma or GED during the reporting period?</p> <p>2002-2003 participants? 2003-2004? 2004-2005? 2005-2006?</p>	<p>THPP only</p> <p>7 20 17 8</p>
<p>How many former THPP/THP+ participants are enrolled in a post-high school vocational training program or college during the reporting period?</p> <p>2002-2003 participants? 2003-2004? 2004-2005? 2005-2006?</p>	<p>THPP only</p> <p>1 7 6 24</p>
<p>How many former THPP/THP+ participants experienced homelessness during the reporting period?</p> <p>2002-2003 participants? 2003-2004? 2004-2005? 2005-2006?</p>	<p>THPP only</p> <p>0 0 0 0</p>

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How many former THPP/THP+ participants were parents during the reporting period?	THPP only
2002-2003 participants?	2
2003-2004?	0
2004-2005?	3
2005-2006?	26
How many former THPP/THP+ participants held a job, apprenticeship, internship, etc. for at least 3 consecutive months during the reporting period?	THPP only
2002-2003 participants?	18
2003-2004?	23
2004-2005?	28
2005-2006?	54

CONCLUSIONS

As the information provided shows, programs for pre and post emancipated youth have been proposed, started, enhanced, downsized, or discontinued. Inconsistent funding streams and changing legislation coupled with local priorities all cause direct impacts to starting and maintaining individual programs. As an example, in 2000 the SSA commented on a recommendation in the "Camelot" report that they could not track emancipated youth, and now (2007) a federal program has presented a proposed rulemaking that will require them to do just that. It may be helpful for local government to be proactive rather than reactive to state and federal mandates. That is not to say that some creative things are not being done; however, the "system" needs to embrace a philosophy of "how can we make this happen" instead of waiting for state or federal funding and direction on some important issues, such as tracking emancipated youth outcomes. Without reasonable outcome data, the programs become nothing more than shooting in the dark hoping to hit a target. How do we know with any certainty that what we are doing works in the absence of this data?

Unfortunately, the above data provides little perspective as to how well the County is addressing the issues identified in the Fullerton Report. Therefore, data should be collected that provides a clear picture of how youth are faring during pre-emancipation and their first few years after emancipation. Gaining an appreciation of the magnitude of the problem is very difficult due to the scattered sources and presentation of available data. The data presented here comes from multiple sources and had to be merged into a single document. If data were presented in a way that identified total population in each category along with population served and their outcomes, an understanding could be gained of the segment of the identified population not being served or served without success. Currently, this is not being done, which makes review and comprehension difficult. Usable information on outcomes needs to be presented in a manner that allows the reader to draw conclusions as to whether or not programs are beneficial to the clients.

Several issues emerge from the information provided. Housing is an ongoing issue along with tracking of emancipated youth. In addition, the ability to exercise ILS prior to emancipation is limited and assessment of ILS prior to emancipation is non-existent. On the positive side, new programs and oversight committees that serve this population are up and running. As stated above,

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the key to all of the time, effort, and money being spent is outcome. How well is the County doing in preparing pre-emancipated youth for successful transition into adulthood?

The Mentors For Youth, a non-profit group serving Anaheim, Fullerton, Orange, and Santa Ana, was founded by an Anaheim police officer who was concerned that street kids in the foster care system were just being warehoused without the services that they needed. It works with children ages 13 to 17 to help them transition into adulthood through programs ranging from tutoring, to locating a job, to information on how to become financially responsible.

Clearly, despite ongoing efforts by SSA, not all emancipated youth are successful. Based on the information provided by SSA, the Grand Jury could not determine how many emancipated youth are failing to succeed in mainstream society.

FINDINGS

In accordance with California Penal Code sections 933 and 933.5, each finding will be responded to by the government entity to which it is addressed. The responses are to be submitted to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court. The 2006-2007 Orange County Grand Jury has arrived at the following findings:

- F-1. A master report that incorporates program data and outcomes does not exist.
- F-2. Available data does not associate programs and outcomes with the Fullerton Report recommendations.
- F-3. It is very difficult to determine total population for each program and what percentage of that population is actually served and their outcomes.
- F-4. A full report, in the form noted above, is not provided to the Board of Supervisors on an annual basis.
- F-5. The annual "Skills Day" is not enough opportunity for pre-emancipated youth to exercise their Independent Living Skills.
- F-6. The demand for pre-emancipation transitional housing and availability is unclear.
- F-7. The web site <http://www.ssa.ocgov.com/youth/default.asp> is not user friendly for emancipated youth.
- F-8. Emancipated youth do not always use the Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment and when they do they may not enter the county identification code.

Responses to Findings F-1 through F-9 are requested from the Social Services Agency.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In accordance with California Penal Code sections 933 and 933.5, each recommendation will be responded to by the government entity to which it is addressed. The responses are to be submitted to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court. Based on the findings of this report, the 2006-2007 Orange County Grand Jury makes the following recommendations:

- R-1. SSA needs to report programs and outcomes in one document. Numbers presented without

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background data border on useless. A report card format would be very beneficial in that it would identify each program and provide population data, i.e. number in the group to be served, number actually served, and number that experienced success and/or percentage of success measured against total population to be served.

- R-2. A link between the Fullerton Report recommendations and what is actually occurring needs to be established. Time, money, and effort were expended in the development of the report and it appears it has been placed on a shelf. If it was important to develop the document then it is equally important to implement its recommendations. The recommendations should be merged into the report card format mentioned in R-1.
- R-3. The presentation of data needs to be in the context of the overall population served. Calling data "outcomes" that merely identify attendance numbers is not really an outcome. Attendance does not automatically mean the youth grasp the concepts. Outcomes should be presented that reflect the youths' ability to actually use the information provided.
- R-4. The report card recommended in R-1 should be presented annually to the Board of Supervisors.
- R-5. The opportunity for youth to exercise Independent Living Skills once a year is not enough. The youth should have multiple opportunities during the year to use the skills they have learned in workshops. Vendor contracts should be revised to require competency testing for each workshop. This would also allow for the assessment of outcomes.
- R-6. The SSA needs to identify the actual demand for Transitional Housing and consider changes to the screening process and criteria for living in these programs.
- R-7. Revise the website so that it contains an area that is specific to pre-and post- emancipated youth services.
- R-8. The SSA has improved the use of the Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment; however, more should be done to ensure participation of post-emancipated youth by offering incentives that are important to them.

A Response to all Recommendations is requested from the Social Services Agency.

RESPONSE REQUIREMENTS

The California Penal Code specifies the required permissible responses to the findings and recommendations contained in this report. The specific sections are quoted below:

§ 933.05. Responses to findings

(a) For purposes of subdivision (b) of section 933, as to each grand jury finding, the responding person or entity shall indicate one of the following:

- (1) The respondent agrees with the finding.
- (2) The respondent disagrees wholly or partially with the finding, in which case the response shall specify the portion of the finding that is disputed and shall include an explanation of the reasons therefor.

(b) For purposes of subdivision (b) of Section 933, as to each grand jury recommendation,

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the responding person or entity shall report one of the following actions

- (1) The recommendation has been implemented, with a summary regarding the implemented action.
- (2) The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future, with a timeframe for implementation.
- (3) The recommendation requires further analysis, with an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or head of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed. This timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of the publication of the grand jury report.
- (4) The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable, with an explanation therefor.

APPENDIX "A"

The findings and responses from the 1999/2000 Grand Jury report ("Orange County is No Camelot for Emancipated Youth") are listed along with excerpts from the agency responses to that report. Finally, updated agency responses were requested by the 2006/2007 Grand Jury and these are included at the end of each numbered segment. This section will provide the reader with a basis for understanding where the county stood in 1999 with respect to emancipated youth and what occurred following that Grand Jury report. Moreover, the 1999/2000 responses identified enhancements and/or new programs that were to be implemented. The updated (2006/2007) responses provide a measure of insight as to how far Orange County has progressed from 1999 and whether or not significant changes have been made to enhance the self-sufficiency of emancipated youth. The full text 1999/2000 report, "Orange County is No Camelot for Emancipated Youth," may be accessed at www.ocgrandjury.org.

- **1999/2000 Grand Jury Report: FINDING**

1. The County database and information about foster youths is inadequate. There has been very little tracking of youths in foster care and group homes. As a result, answers to such questions as their health and educational background are not readily available for appropriate decision making. County projections about the number of emancipated youths are strictly an estimate. There is no information about what percentage have a high school diploma, about how many attend college, or how many end up homeless.

Excerpts from the 1999/2000 Social Services Agency response:

Disagree partially with the finding.

While the Child Welfare System/Case Management System (CWS/CMS) system was deployed in all of California's counties in 1997, it remains a system under development and will be in a developmental mode for several years. The features this finding comments upon as lacking are slated for future development.

The lack of aggregate case profile information and useful management information from the current CWS/CMS is a concern of many counties and is being addressed in the on-going system development and management processes in Sacramento.

2006/07 Grand Jury follow-up: What is the current status of CWS/CMS?

Oct. 2006 Response: *CWS/CMS remains incapable at the present time of tracking services received by foster youth who have emancipated from either Dependency or Probation. In July 2006, the federal Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (ACF), issued their proposed rulemaking to require*

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States to collect and report data to ACF on youth who are receiving independent living services and the outcomes of certain youth who are in foster care or who age out of foster care. The California Department of Social Services is currently determining how they will comply with this new regulation, by either updating the CWS/CMS to allow for the tracking of this information or through the development of an additional database for counties to use.

The Orange County Independent Living Program Database was implemented September 10, 2001. This is a standalone database into which information regarding the ILP-eligible foster and emancipated youth is entered and maintained on a monthly basis. As the Emancipation Services, ILP Contracts, and Youth Permanency Program, expand with new services and contract providers, data from those efforts are included for each participating youth. Currently, Orange County ILP is pursuing joining the California Connected by 25 Initiative (CC251). CC251 is a project sponsored through the Casey and Stuart Foundations, which provide technical assistance to counties, in assessing their Independent Living Programs, with the goal of building a local, integrated system of transition supports and services for emancipating and emancipated foster youth ages 14 to 24. Included in this project is the Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) database, which is used to track important basic outcomes for transition aged youth.

- **1999/2000 Grand Jury Report: FINDING**

2. The current Independent Living Program for emancipated youths in Orange County, which is a critical program for self-sufficiency and independent living, can be considered mediocre at best. To be effective, it should be presented in a transitional housing milieu with attendance mandatory.

Excerpts from the 1999/2000 Social Services Agency response:

Disagree wholly with the finding

While we do not quarrel with the premise that more can be done if and when additional federal ILP funding is provided, there are activities underway which it appears the Grand Jury may not have inventoried:

- Community forum to solicit interest in development of Transitional Housing Program Pilot, to serve 17 year old foster youth. SSA has selected Olive Crest and Florence Crittendon Services to each develop THPP programs, and is working with each provider and the California Department of Social Services to initiate services as soon as possible.

2006/07 Grand Jury follow-up: What is the current status of this program?

Oct. 2006 Response: *On August 25, 2000 the California Department of Social Services approved the Transitional Housing Placement Program (THPP) plan submitted by the County of Orange Social Services Agency. This program plan allows for a variety of THPP physical plant formats. The current provider uses a scatter-site apartment complex format, where foster youth aged 16 years and older reside with individual bedrooms in two-bedroom apartments, surrounded by adult tenants. The CDSS Division of Community Care Licensing licenses this facility as a group home. The foster youth in this facility attend school, are part-time employed, receive therapy, prepare their own meals, do their own laundry, and are coached and monitored by staff trained in facilitating independent living skills. There have been as many as 20 foster youth participating in this service program in some months. It prepares youth to live independently, and to be more acceptable candidates for transitional housing programs available in Orange County for emancipated youth.*

- Private Industry Council and SSA procedures to provide re-employment and training services to pre and post emancipated youth.

2006/07 Grand Jury follow-up: What is the current status of this program?

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Oct. 2006 Response: *The Orange County ILP is an active partner in the Workforce Investment Boards (WTB) with active voting membership in the Youth Councils for each of the Anaheim, Santa Ana, and Orange County WTBS. Similarly, the three WTB Youth Council Coordinators are active members in the Children's Services Coordination Committee (CSCC) Emancipation Services Subcommittee.*

The SSA ILP, Probation and WTB collaboration drafted a Miscellaneous Order, which was signed by the Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Court, the Honorable Robert B. Hutson. This document authorizes the release of Transitional Independent Living Plans (TILP) and vocational Assessment documents to the Workforce Investment Act contract providers, thereby expediting the delivery of services to all ILP-eligible foster youth.

- SSA support of community based efforts to develop transitional housing programs for emancipated youth through Super NOFA funding. Funding has been awarded to Shelter for the Homeless, YMCA and Olivecrest.

2006/07 Grand Jury follow-up: *What support was provided and what programs have been implemented?*

Oct. 2006 Response: *There are now a total of 65 beds available in Orange County for emancipated youth, provided through contracts and community collaborations. The SSA ILP program has developed contracts with Orange County Housing Authority and the Santa Ana Housing Authority through the Family Unification Program, to support emancipated youth on the path to self-sufficiency for a maximum of eighteen months. Olive Crest has developed the Crossroads program for housing and supportive services to emancipated youth. This is a continuation of the THPP contracted services that they provide to foster youth through the ILP program.*

Orangewood Children's Foundation and a group of entrepreneurs from Mariner's Church developed the Rising Tides Program in two apartment complexes located in Garden Grove and Tustin. These 80-apartment facilities house up to 18 emancipated youth each, two to an apartment, where the other tenants subsidize the rent cost for the emancipated youth. Over a period of 18 months, the emancipated youth incrementally increase their contribution to the rent, in preparation for when they will complete the program and live on their own.

- State Department of Education funding for the Foster Youth Services project, a collaborative model involving the Orange County Department of Education, the Health Care Agency, the Probation Department and others. The goal of services is to improve the continuity of education for youth in group home programs.

2006/07 Grand Jury follow-up: *What is the current status of the program?*

Oct. 2006 Response: *Orange County ILP developed a contract with Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) in 2002, through the Foster Youth Services program, initially focusing only on services for Group Home youth. This program has expanded to include all foster youth aged 14 and older. The current services include tracking of classes taken, the grades achieved for each class, the credits accumulated toward high school graduation, as well as reading and math proficiency at the close of each semester. The School Counselors funded in this project also provide recommendations on services to achieve timely graduation, and act as liaisons with the 28 School Districts to facilitate those services in behalf of foster youth.*

- ILP services provided weekly to youth at Orangewood Children's Home.

2006/07 Grand Jury follow-up: *What services?*

Oct. 2006 Response: *As a part of the ILP Workshops, Seminars, and Special Events contract, peer mentors from the current Provider, Orangewood Children's Foundation (OCF), provide weekly Independent Living Skills presentations for ILP-eligible foster youth residing at Orangewood Children's Home.*

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- Independent City, a mock day long experience allowing youth to apply for jobs, apartments, checking accounts, budget funds for grocery shopping, etc.

2006/07 Grand Jury follow-up: Is this a one-time experience for each youth?

Oct. 2006/07 Response: *Independent City is a full-day Special Event, under the ILP Workshops, Seminars, and Special Events contract, which is offered one time per year. ILP eligible foster youth may attend this special event every year. It is designed to help the youth apply in a "real life" situation the life skills that they have learned all year long at the 130 workshops presented each year under the contract.*

- There are no established standards for Independent Living Programs, and no evidence to suggest that a program is best presented in a transitional housing milieu.

2006 Grand Jury follow-up: Has this information changed?

Oct. 2006 Response: *The State of California has encouraged each county to provide basic core ILP services, so that foster youth from one county jurisdiction, but placed in another county will have generally equivalent services. Orange County ILP provides far more individualized services than are offered to foster youth in any of the adjacent counties.*

The State of California has limited funds allocated for transitional housing programs, and few counties are currently participating in this service. Orange County ILP youth have achieved success with THPP program services in this county. Whereas this program's milieu services work well for the participating youth, the majority of foster youth live with relatives, in licensed foster homes, in Foster Family Agency homes, or in Group Homes. Orange County ILP is reaching out to foster care providers in each of these settings to encourage them to employ the Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment Online tool found at www.caseylifeskills.org on a quarterly basis to assist foster youth in preparing for self-sufficiency.

• **1999/2000 Grand Jury Report:** FINDING

3. The measure of success for a pre-emancipation Independent Living Program, following the instruction of AB1111, should be enabling participants to seek a high school diploma, providing vocational training and job readiness, locating and obtaining housing, providing daily living skills and providing individual and group counseling. The Independent Living Program should be more than discussion and classes. There should be "hands on" experience and concrete assistance in preparing for independence prior to discharge.

Excerpts from the 1999/2000 agency response:

Agrees with finding

With-out any "hands-on" opportunities, that implication is correct.

2006/07 Grand Jury follow-up: What are the current "hands-on opportunities?"

Oct. 2006 Response: *The current ILP Workshop contract with OCF provides hands-on application for a variety of life skills issues. In addition, the contract provides financial incentives for each participating foster youth to do the homework associated with each workshop topic, so that the youth can apply what they have learned in their current placement setting, and prepare themselves for applying these skills in their life after they emancipate. Also, as above, the Independent City event provides a one-day opportunity each year to apply the skills learned in the workshops.*

- It is important to note that AB-1111 ILP services and programs direction and services are a work in progress by the State of California. Counties are awaiting state guidelines and standards regarding ILP program design, which should bring some statewide uniformity to

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the county ILP programs.

2006/07 Grand Jury follow-up: What is the current status of state and county programs? What has been implemented since this response?

Oct. 2006 Response: *In November 2005, the State of California Department of Social Services enacted ILP regulations for the first time. Prior to that time, there were ILP guidelines in place. As mentioned above, there is still a great variety in how ILP services are delivered from county to county. CDSS continues to work with the County Welfare Directors Association on allowing counties the flexibility of developing their ILP programs to meet the needs of the youth placed in their county, while ensuring the youths' individual needs are met, no matter where they reside.*

- **1999/2000 Grand Jury Report:** FINDING

4. The new John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (HR3443) requires more extensive assessment of performance based on certain outcomes, including education, employment, avoidance of dependency, homelessness, non-marital childbirth, and incarceration.

Excerpts from the 1999/2000 agency response:

Agrees with finding.

Awaiting a policy statement by the Governor regarding its implementation and proposed use of the additional federal funding that this legislation will bring to the State of California.

2006/07 Grand Jury follow-up: What is the status of the Governor's policy statement?

Oct. 2006 Response: *The State of California Department of Social Services has established a mechanism to distribute Federal funding to each county for ILP services. The allocation methodology is currently under review for possible revision.*

- **1999/2000 Grand Jury Report:** FINDING

5. The relatively few programs in Orange County designed to serve emancipated youths are scattered and fragmented. Those who operate them often do so without knowledge of other similar programs.

Excerpts from the 1999/2000 agency response:

Disagrees partially with the finding

Future Search has developed sub-committees to coordinate efforts in specific areas, e.g. housing, transportation, and jobs.

2006/07 Grand Jury follow-up: What is the current status of Future Search and what advancements have been made as a result of their efforts?

Oct. 2006 Response: *The County of Orange Board of Supervisors established the Children's Services Coordination Committee (CSCC) as a formal committee, with monthly meetings at the Hall of Administration Board Conference Room. Membership in this committee consists of representatives from all County Agencies providing services to children. There are also representatives from several community service agencies represented in this committee. Leadership in this committee is currently held by Dr. Michael Riley, Director of the Division of Children and Family Services in the Social Services Agency.*

A CSCC Emancipation Subcommittee has also been formed, and meets monthly. Membership includes representatives from the Social Services Agency (SSA), Probation, Health Care Agency Public Health Nurses and Behavioral Health psychologists, the three Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs), Regional Center of Orange County, as well as

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foster care and service providers in the Orange County community.

- Orangewood Children's Foundation (OCF) has organized several meetings to facilitate the sharing of information, resources and programs for emancipated youth, especially in the area of housing.

2006/07 Grand Jury follow-up: What has been accomplished as a result of the meetings?

Oct. 2006 Response: *As mentioned above in section 2, over the last several years, SSA ILP program has developed contracts with local Housing Authorities to provide housing and services to emancipated youth. Community providers such as Rising Tides, Crossroads, Wise Place, YWCA, Mery House, Joseph's House, Ladder to Success, Harbor Village, and Connections House have also developed housing and services for emancipated youth, with an average 18 month duration. Orange County ILP is preparing a Transitional Housing Program-PLUS (THP+) proposal for CDSS this month to augment the number of emancipation housing resources.*

- **1999/2000 Grand Jury Report:** FINDING

6. In spite of the past two Grand Jury reports alerting the Orange County Board of Supervisors to this critical situation, the Board of Supervisors has not budgeted funds for transitional housing, or taken formal action on transitional housing for emancipated youths. The Social Services Agency has responded to prior Grand Jury reports of the past two years by claiming that they are developing and implementing transitional housing for youths after emancipation. At the present time, Orange County has very few housing options available for emancipating youths. A few small privately-funded programs are providing services but are not available to accommodate the number of estimated youths needing transitional housing services.

Excerpts from the 1999/2000 agency response:
Disagree wholly with the finding

In response to the 1997-1998 Grand Jury report, the Social Services Agency stated the intent to host roundtable sessions involving private and public organizations, with the goal of completing an inventory of resources and of identifying gaps in service. These roundtables were held and have evolved into other informal collaborative efforts, including Future Search.

2006/07 Grand Jury follow-up: Has the Social Services Agency continued to identify resources and gaps in service? Are the informal collaborative efforts ongoing, if so what are they?

Oct. 2006 Response: *As mentioned above in the last two responses in section 5, the CSCC Emancipation Subcommittee Meeting is the monthly venue for identifying gaps and resources. Several housing resources have been established for emancipated youth.*

The County of Orange Board of Supervisors voted in 2001 to exercise the option offered by CDSS to participate in Assembly Bill 427. Among the changes evolving from that legislation were the expansion of THPP services to foster youth as young as 16 years, and the Transitional Housing Program – PLUS (THP+) for services and housing to emancipated youth up to age 24. At that juncture the County share of cost was sixty percent. State funding for this project dried up within months, and Orange County had to withdraw its participation in the project.

Legislation enacted in 2006 now allows Counties to submit a THP+ Program plan, and requires that as long as the State funds are sufficient, the cost of the new THP+ programs is borne 100% by the State of California. Orange County SSA is submitting its proposal to the State for requested participation in this THP+ project.

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• **1999/2000 Grand Jury Report:** FINDING

7. The County of Orange does not have an administrative umbrella to coordinate programs and services for emancipating youths. The missing linchpin is a director with authority and responsibility to coordinate the efforts of all concerned agencies and private nonprofit caregivers.

Excerpts from the 1999/2000 agency response:
Disagree partially with the finding

The Director of the Social Services Agency, Children and Family Services, has committed to lead the broad-based collaborative effort initiated through the Future Search process. This effort, strengthened by the issuance of statewide Independent Living Program standards and by new federal and state funding streams, holds the greatest promise for an improved Orange County network of services.

2006/07 Grand Jury follow-up: What are the outcomes of this effort?

Oct. 2006 Response: *As mentioned above in Section 5, the Director of SSA Children and Family Services Division chairs the CSCC monthly committee meetings, and does, in fact, coordinate the efforts of County Agencies, concerned agencies and non-profit caregivers. This broad-based collaborative, coupled with the monthly CSCC Emancipation Subcommittee meetings, are effectively taking full advantage of federal and funding streams, including the Mental Health Services Act (Proposition 63) funds to create and sustain services for ILP-eligible youth.*

• **1999/2000 Grand Jury Report:** RECOMMENDATION

1. The Social Services Agency should direct the Technology Services Department to develop a tracking system to collect data for 16- to 21-year-old foster youths.

Excerpts from the 1999/2000 agency response:
The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not reasonable.

The Social Services Agency has no authority or ability to maintain oversight of youth after the Juvenile Court terminates dependency status. The Social Services Agency lacks a source of funding for the development of an Orange County specific tracking system. SSA will seek the support of other counties and the State of California to develop such a feature in CWS/CMS.

2006/07 Grand Jury follow-up: What has SSA done to gain consensus with other counties and the state to implement a tracking program? Can the new CalWin system be used to track emancipated youth when they apply for government assistance? Could pre-emancipated youth information be placed in the CalWIN system in order to track them after emancipation if/when they apply for aid?

Oct. 2006 Response: *In 2002, given the inability of CWS/CMS to track ILP services provided, and the outcomes for those youth, Orange County SSA developed a stand-alone ILP database. This software application is user-friendly and has the capacity to augment fields to track new services as they are added. In addition, Orange County ILP is seeking participation in the California Connected by 25 project, to join 5 other counties that have access to a web-based application called Efforts to Outcomes. This system will help Orange County to be a leader statewide in tracking the outcomes that will be required of California Counties by the Federal government.*

• **1999/2000 Grand Jury Report:** RECOMMENDATION

2. The Independent Living Program for emancipated youths should be presented with a transitional housing program which includes independence but also supervision and coaching and counseling, especially in the areas of education and employment. The

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transitional housing programs that exist in Orange County should be authorized to present the Independent Living Program and should also be compensated.

Excerpts from the 1999/2000 agency response:

The recommendation requires further analysis

Final Response: The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not reasonable. At this time, no funding source exists to support this concept. However, funding resources are under development. The Social Services Agency will continue its efforts with collaborative public, private and faith based organizations, as it awaits development of statewide standards and clarifications of state/federal funding streams.

2006/07 Grand Jury follow-up: What has been done? Have standards and clarifications been realized?

Oct. 2006 Response: As mentioned in Findings Section 6 above, Orange County ILP is submitting a THP+ Project Plan this month, in anticipation of approval by CDSS as a THP+ county for the Fiscal Year 2007/2008. This State-funded plan includes proposals for the three distinct types of housing formats, addressing the diverse needs of the emancipated youth. This service plan has measurable outcome elements including post-secondary educational advancement, employment enhancement to achieve a living wage in Orange County, increased access to health and mental health services, living skills development, as well as financial education and savings toward independent housing.

- Chaffee Act: It doubled the amount of federal funds for the Independent Living Program. This legislation potentially impacts child welfare services, in part, in the following ways:

Funds for education, vocational and job training necessary to obtain employment and/or prepare for secondary education, training in daily living skills, substance abuse prevention, pregnancy prevention and preventative health activities and connections to dedicated adults.

Requires a portion of the funds to be used for older youth, ages 18 to 21. A portion may be used for room and board.

2006/07 Grand Jury follow-up: Since receiving Chaffee Act funds what programs have been implemented or enhanced?

Oct. 2006 Response: *Orange County ILP has expanded its service population on both ends, now serving foster youth from age 14, and emancipated youth until their 21st birthday. Linkages with the Federal Workforce Investment Act contracts in each of the Anaheim, Santa Ana, and Orange County WIBs are now automatic. The matriculation of foster youth into those employment preparation, job training, job placement, and job retention services is accelerated by the Miscellaneous Order signed this year by the Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Court. Using the Transitional Independent Living Plan and Vocational Assessment documents already completed to take the place of lengthy and duplicious interviews for the foster youth, outcomes for continued participation in these services are improved.*

- The State Department of Health and Human Services is required to issue regulations for the disbursement of additional funds to Counties within the next 12 months. Over the course of the next 12 months, the Social Services Agency will be evaluating and working with the State and local providers to develop new and augment existing services.

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2006/07 Grand Jury follow-up: What new services were developed and what existing services have been augmented?

Oct. 2006 Response: *The ILP workshop contract now requires the provider to deliver 130 ILP workshops and seminars, as well as 6 special events each calendar year. Independent Living Coaches are now provided to a minimum of 150 foster and emancipated youth. Mentoring contracts and memoranda of understanding are in place with 5 community based organizations. The academic performance tracking contract with OCDE has been established, and with leverage of new funding sources, will double the number of foster youth served. A Vocational Assessment contract has been established, providing foster youth with individualized assessment identifying entry level positions in at least three career paths available in Orange County that the foster youth are prepared to pursue. The ILP staff is facilitating Emancipation Planning Conferences, which provide the foster youth with an opportunity to lead the planning for short-term and long-range goals. Family finding and engagement services that create connections between foster youth and healthy extended family members began in October 2004, and Orange County is one of 14 counties participating in the California Permanency for Youth Project (CPYP).*

• **1999/2000 Grand Jury Report:** RECOMMENDATION

3. The pre-emancipation Independent Living Program should be improved by authorizing and compensating group homes for presenting the Independent Living Program because they will be able to provide more concrete and hands-on assistance and address the transportation problem. Group homes are better qualified to monitor educational progress and provide tutors, if needed, to help their youths obtain a high school diploma, which is the most important element of the Independent Living Program.

Excerpts from the 1999/2000 agency response:

The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but it will be implemented in the future. Significant program developments are in process and planned for within the next six months.

Final Response: The recommendation has been implemented.

We are assured that the California Department of Social Services will develop statewide standards for the delivery of ILP within six months. At that time, the Social Services Agency will reassess its pre-emancipation program.

2006/07 Grand Jury follow-up: What was the result of the reassessment of the pre-emancipation program?

Oct. 2006 Response: *Since the last SSA response, CDSS Community Care Licensing regulations, as well as SSA Contracts obligations for Group Homes have changed, holding group homes responsible for providing ILP services and facilitating ILP services involvement by foster youth in their charge. Among all foster care providers, the group homes have become the most active supporters of transporting the foster youth to ILP workshops and activities. Orange County ILP has required the use of the www.caseylifeskills.org web site assessment by all foster care providers. Academic tracking and recommendations for augmented services provided through the ILP contract with OCDE have provided all the foster care providers with essential tools to assist foster youth in their academic progress toward high school graduation. As mentioned above in Findings Section 3 above, CDSS did not complete the ILP Regulation in Division 30 and Division 31 until November 2005. Orange County ILP anticipated those regulations, and had many of the services and standards in place before the regulations were implemented.*

- The Transitional Housing Placement Program (THPP) is a state pilot project authorized by Assembly Bill 2774. This program will provide well-supervised, semi-independent living situations for 17-18 year olds that are still in foster care. It is funded by AFDC foster care dollars. SSA is in the process of selecting a contractor(s) to provide these services to youth.

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2006/07 Grand Jury follow-up: Was this program implemented? What is the current status of this program?

Oct. 2006 Response: *As mentioned in Finding 6 above, Orange County ILP implemented the expansion of THPP services in 2002 to include foster youth as young as 16 years of age. There is currently one licensed THPP provider in Orange County, providing services to 10 foster youth. Orange County was required in September 2006 to specify the maximum number of THPP beds that it would use, based on the funding streams allocated at that juncture to this State-sponsored program. Orange County ILP specified twenty beds, which is the maximum number of youth in any given month that have been placed in this program.*

- The Social Services Agency is currently working with the Orange County Department of Education in a collaborative project titled CORE (Collaborative Options Resource Efficacy) to support the education needs of emancipating youth to age 21.

2006/07 Grand Jury follow-up: What is the status of CORE? What was accomplished?

Oct. 2006 Response: *The CORE program is known statewide as Foster Youth Services (FYS). Orange County ILP has established a contract with FYS, as mentioned in Finding Section 2 above, which not only serves foster youth placed in group homes, but now serves all foster youth 14 years and older. Orange County has changed the CORE name to FYS, to coincide with other California Counties. This week, Orange County ILP joined OCDE and Probation representatives in drafting a grant proposal to expand the FYS academic services to now assist former foster youth who are now Probation Wards serving time in Probation Institutions.*

- Also, recently acquired ILP staff is working with ILP providers, including Cypress College, Santa Ana College, and the Orangewood Children's Foundation, to enhance ILP educational and vocational services.

2006/07 Grand Jury follow-up: What enhancements have been made as a result of this endeavor?

Oct. 2006 Response: *The Bridges to Higher Education Program was established to provide academic mentoring and enhancement services to prepare foster youth for post-secondary education opportunities. Collaborations with 15 universities and vocational schools started at California State University Fullerton, and have been developed under the title Guardian Scholars, providing emancipated foster youth with free tuition, books, fees, and in some cases year-around housing to support their post-secondary education and training. There is legislation pending in the State of California that would expand the Guardian Scholar program to all State Universities.*

- **1999/2000 Grand Jury Report:** RECOMMENDATION

4. The Independent Living Program should focus on key areas that are critical to independent living: education, employment, housing, and reducing the probability of early parenthood. A study with specific recommendations should be initiated to evaluate the Independent Living Program in Orange County. An evaluation of the program is needed that links the objectives of the program with the results.

No response required

- **1999/2000 Grand Jury Report:** RECOMMENDATION

5. The Social Services Agency should take the leadership role in coordinating all of the current, fragmented programs for emancipated youths currently in Orange County.

Excerpts from the 1999/2000 agency response:

Response: The recommendation has not been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.

Final Response: The recommendation has been implemented.

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The Social Services Agency has acquired a Program Manager to fill this role and expand the Independent Living Program.

2006/07 Grand Jury follow-up: How has the Program Manager expanded the ILP?

Oct. 2006 Response: *Since 2001, the current Program Manager has expanded the Independent Living Program in many ways. Orange County has established a uniform assessment tool for tracking foster youth progress on life skill achievement (www.caseylifeskills.org). ILP Services went from serving a population of foster youth between the ages of 16-19, and now serves all foster youth and emancipated youth from age 14 until the 21st birthday. The program staff grew from two Senior Social Workers to now seven Senior Social Workers, serving 2,752 youth in the last FFY. Educational tracking and academic enhancement services are serving all foster youth 14 years and older. Independent Living Coaches are now serving in excess of 150 foster youth. ILP workshops and seminars numbering 130 each calendar year are provided to youth. THPP services have been fully implemented in Orange County. There are currently a minimum of 65 emancipated youth beds available among those operated by ILP contracts and community organizations. The Orange County THP+ proposal is being prepared for delivery to CDSS, in hopes of implementation in FY07/08.*

The findings and recommendations of the Emancipated Youth Housing Study in collaboration with California State University Fullerton have been implemented to enhance the applications of life skills in the daily lives of foster youth, and create extended family connections that will bring hope and additional resources to emancipating foster youth.

• **1999/2000 Grand Jury Report:** RECOMMENDATION

6. The Board of Supervisors, County Executive Office, and the Social Services Agency, following leadership on both the federal and state levels, should elevate transitional housing for emancipated youths to the highest priority.

Response: The recommendation requires further analysis

Final Response: The recommendation has been implemented.

SSA plans to initiate such an emancipation program planning process with the arrival of the new, increased federal funding for emancipation services within the next six months to one year. Undoubtedly, transitional housing will be identified as one of the foremost needs to be addressed.

2006/07 Grand Jury follow-up: What is the status of this program planning process and what has been implemented or enhanced? Was transitional housing identified as one of the foremost needs?

Oct. 2006 Response: *As mentioned in the Findings Section 5 and 6, as well as in Recommendations Sections 2 and 5 above, stable emancipation housing is the foundation upon which all other services can be effective in the youth's lives. Housing resources developed since 2001 are helpful, but there are approximately 250 foster youth emancipating each year. Housing for emancipated youth will be greatly enhanced as Orange County is approved as a THP+ County in FY07/08.*

• **1999/2000 Grand Jury Report:** RECOMMENDATION

7. An administrative position should be created whose purpose is to coordinate all of the County and private agencies similar to the collaborative efforts of Friends of the Children Bridges and the Probation Department's Children and Family Resource Centers. This position would also have the responsibility and accountability for all pre- and post-emancipated Independent Living Programs.

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Excerpts from the 1999/2000 agency response:

Response: The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.

Final Response: The recommendation has been implemented.

...new federal laws require that ILP services be extended to include youth to age 21, thereby doubling the ILP caseload. These guidelines are to be put into place over the next 12 months. Further, the development and oversight of transitional housing placement services will increase contract oversight responsibilities.

Therefore, significant expansion of the ILP program and support staffs has been requested in a budget augmentation request supported by County Administration.

2006/07 Grand Jury follow-up: What was the outcome of implementing the new federal laws?

Oct. 2006 Response: Orange County ILP acted on the option available in the legislation of providing services to foster youth as young as 14 years. This, in concert with the augmentation of older emancipated youth, provided an ILP service population during the last reporting period (FFY 05/06) of 2,752 youth between the ages of 14 and 21 years. The staffing for ILP was augmented, and the services enumerated in Recommendations Section 5 above have been implemented.

The ILP Program Manager will facilitate the coordinated efforts of county agency and community partners in developing a comprehensive emancipation services program for foster youth.

2006/07 Grand Jury follow-up: Please explain the results of this effort?

Oct. 2006 Response: As noted in the Findings Section 5 above, the ILP Program Manager and SSA Management coordinate the development and maintenance of community partnerships and coordinate interventions through the overarching CSCC monthly meetings, and the monthly CSCC Emancipation Subcommittee meetings. These groups of dedicated community partners have assisted SSA management in the development of enhanced academic services, mentoring services, independent living skill development resources, post secondary education resources, and emancipation housing resources.