



Creating Access to  
Extended Foster Care  
for Probation  
Supervised Foster  
Youth: An Examination  
of Bay Area AB 12  
Practices

# **Executive Summary**

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### *Introduction*

Foster youth transitioning from state care to adulthood are at serious risk of bad outcomes including dropping out of school, being unemployed, experiencing incarceration, and suffering from mental health conditions. Recognizing the emancipation challenges faced by foster youth, the federal government and California enacted a series of legislation, known collectively in California as AB 12, to extend foster care for youth meeting certain eligibility criteria from age 18 to age 21. AB 12 was phased in over a three-year period beginning in 2012. However, little is known about AB 12's impact, particularly on probation supervised foster youth, who experience similarly poor emancipation outcomes and often lack access to needed supports and services.

With the support of a grant from the Zellerbach Family Foundation, the Youth Law Center undertook a project to explore the state of extended foster care for probation supervised foster youth in the Bay Area. The project specifically assessed whether Bay Area probation supervised foster youth are receiving the benefits of extended foster care, the barriers to access, and the best practices for serving this population's needs. The Youth Law Center engaged in both formal and informal data collection, including assessment of state databases, data provided by localities, and informational interviews with a variety of stakeholders from around the Bay Area. This report details the project's findings and makes recommendations for change.

### *Significant Findings*

- **Probation supervised foster youth are not accessing the full benefits of AB 12.** Statewide, 61% of probation supervised youth in foster care at age 17 have their cases closed, precluding participation in extended foster care. In the Bay Area in 2015, 70% of child welfare supervised youth in EFC aged out of care compared to only 12% of probation supervised youth. Probation supervised youth who should be eligible for and receiving extended foster care benefits are instead losing eligibility prematurely.
- **Probation departments underutilize placements in family-based settings.** In 2016, only Alameda and Marin counties reported that probation supervised youth were placed in kinship or guardian settings, and Alameda reported a placement rate in kinship care of only .6%. No Bay Area counties reported using foster family homes to house probation supervised youth. The failure to use such family-based placements interferes with probation supervised foster youths' ability to develop permanency connections and succeed in extended foster care.
- **Probation supervised foster youth face significant barriers in obtaining and maintaining placements.** Virtually all stakeholders highlighted lack of available, appropriate, and affordable placements as a barrier for probation supervised foster youth. The lack of sufficient transitional housing beds to meet demand, combined with unaffordable Bay Area rents and the underuse of family-based placements, are significant barriers for probation supervised foster youth seeking placement after leaving group care

settings. Probation supervised foster youth also face placement instability, as such youth are often not provided sufficient preparation for the transition from group care to independent living settings. Despite the significant probability that probation supervised youth will experience placement disruption, counties are ill-prepared to handle the situation, with inadequate or no plans for emergency housing support.

- **Probation supervision creates significant barriers for youth seeking to participate in extended foster care.** Just as with child welfare supervised youth, transition is a time where probation supervised youth often exhibit behaviors that reflect the effects of early trauma, abuse and neglect. However, issues that might result in a child welfare supervised youth being referred for additional services can result in a probation supervised youth spending time in detention – and as a result, having his housing, work, and education significantly disrupted. A youth under terms of probation may be reluctant to seek help with substance issues or difficulty enrolling in school. Even where a youth is no longer on probation, probation supervision can create a barrier, as probation officers sometimes struggle with the level and type of case management that extended foster care requires, lack necessary information about supports and services available, and lack a trusting relationship with their clients.
- **Probation-supervised foster youth are significantly less connected with service providers than their child-welfare supervised peers.** Some probation officers may be unaware of available supports and therefore fail to connect youth with these supports. Probation supervised foster youth, who are regularly placed in out-of-county group homes, often lack the opportunity to create connections with service providers in their home counties prior to transition to extended foster care. Finally, some providers fail to make probation specific outreach efforts and lack knowledge about the population. Combined, these difficulties mean that probation supervised youth receive less support in extended foster care than their child welfare supervised peers.
- **Probation supervised youth need enhanced supports at times of transition, both between foster care and extended foster care and from extended foster care to independence.** The barriers facing probation supervised youth are even more acute at times of transition. While some counties have robust transition planning at both 18 and when a youth leaves care, others lag behind.

### *Key Recommendations*

- **Training for probation departments and other key stakeholders, including Foster Family Agencies, foster parents, transitional housing providers, public defenders, and service providers.** All participants in the system must be well-educated about the rights, needs, and vulnerabilities of probation supervised foster youth, as well as the resources available to meet those needs. This includes training for probation, FFAs, and foster parents on family-based placement resources and on how to parent and support probation supervised foster youth. It also includes training for probation officers and other system stakeholders on effective case management techniques, benefits available to

youth in extended foster care, especially educational benefits, and the specific needs of probation supervised foster youth.

- **Improved case planning and management, especially in times of transition, to ensure that young people are connected to supports and services to help them succeed.** Probation departments should develop practices and create written policies and procedures that not only incorporate important information about legal requirements, expected timelines for action, and required forms, but also explain the supportive role of an EFC case manager and his or her responsibility for helping youth achieve their goals. Probation departments should also have explicit transition planning procedures, and the youth's current placement should be part of the planning process and take responsibility for developing the supportive programming and services that will help youth successfully transition to a more independent setting
- **Increased support in housing probation supervised youth in extended foster care, including advance planning, development of supportive housing options, financial supports for SILPs, and robust emergency placement protocols.** Planning for a transition from group care to independent living should begin at least six months in advance to ensure continuity of placement. Youth who are placed in SILPs should be given support in accessing available housing assistance and additional sources of assistance should be developed. Probation departments must work with providers to develop housing placements that support probation-supervised youth, including family-based placements, and to develop emergency housing protocols that comply with the law and can support youth in transition.
- **Termination of probation as early as possible and a support-first policy for those youth who remain subject to terms and conditions of probation.** Probation should be terminated for youth participating in extended foster care once they leave a group home placement except in unusual circumstances. If youth remain on probation while participating in extended foster care, probation departments or attorneys should seek modifications of probation terms that respond to the needs of youth. Probation departments should develop written policies requiring referrals to services be provided prior to filing a probation violation, and any probation violations should be filed on an out-of-custody basis to avoid the loss of housing pending adjudication of the violation.
- **Networks of collaboration between probation departments, public defenders, community organizations, and other stakeholders.** Probation departments must develop strong collaborations with community, faith and service organizations to provide youth with “wrap around” services to help them adjust to healthy life in the community, access benefits, and successfully engage in school and employment. Probation departments, public defenders, and service providers should collaborate to create “no wrong door” reentry procedures.

## **Creating Access to Extended Foster Care for Probation Supervised Foster Youth: An Examination of Bay Area AB 12 Practices**

### **Introduction**

Congress enacted the Fostering Connections to Success Act of 2008 to promote permanency and improve outcomes of foster youth aging out of care at age 18. California's Fostering Connections to Success Act, enacted in 2010 through Assembly Bill 12 (AB 12),<sup>1</sup> implements the federal law by extending benefits up to age 21, providing a foster care reentry option for foster youth who exit care after turning 18, and enhancing transition supports. The first cohort of AB 12 eligible youth entered extended foster care in 2012, yet little has been done to assess whether probation supervised foster youth are accessing AB 12 supports and services enjoyed by their child welfare supervised counterparts. The major studies of child welfare supervised youth participating in AB 12 in California have not examined probation supervised foster youth.<sup>2</sup> With the support of a grant from the Zellerbach Family Foundation, the Youth Law Center undertook a project to explore the state of extended foster care for probation supervised foster youth in the Bay Area. This report examines quantitative and qualitative data to assess the participation of eligible probation supervised youth in extended foster care (EFC), AB 12 practices, and barriers to participation.

### ***AB 12 Background***

California's Fostering Connections to Success Act (AB 12) expands the foster care (AFDC-FC), Kin-GAP and Adoption Assistance (AAP) programs to help foster youth establish lifelong connections with caring adults and successfully transition to adulthood and independence. AB 12 includes both child welfare and probation supervised foster youth. Many studies have documented the poor outcomes of young people transitioning from foster care to young adulthood.<sup>3</sup> Foster youth are an educationally at-risk population, as they experience higher rates

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<sup>1</sup> California's Fostering Connections to Success Act, Assembly Bill 12 (2010), has been significantly enhanced by subsequent legislation (*e.g.* AB 212 (2011), AB 1712 (2012) and SB 1013 (2012)), but the programs of extended care for transition age foster youth are commonly referred to as AB 12.

<sup>2</sup> Courtney, M.E. and Okpych, N. *Memo from CalYOUTH: Early Findings on Extended Foster Care and Legal Permanency*, Chapin Hall Issue Brief, July 2015.

<sup>3</sup> *Midwest evaluation of the adult functioning of former foster youth: Outcomes at age 23 and 24*, Courtney, M.E., Dworsky, A., & Lee, J. (2010) Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago; *Midwest evaluation of the adult functioning of former foster youth: Outcomes at age 21*, Courtney, M.E., Dworsky, A., Cusick, G.R., Havlicek, J., Perez, A., & Keller, T. (2007), Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago; *Assessing the effects of foster care: Early results from the Casey National Alumni Study*, Pecora, P. J., Williams, J., Kessler, R. C., Downs, C., O'Brien, K., Hiripi, E., et al. (2003), Seattle, WA: Casey Family Programs.

of school mobility, lower academic achievement, and higher dropout rates than their non-foster care counterparts.<sup>4</sup> Not surprisingly, former foster youth transitioning to adulthood and independence are more likely to be unemployed, homeless or incarcerated and to experience mental health issues than young adults who have not been in foster care.<sup>5</sup>

In response to the challenges emancipated foster youth face, Congress in 2008 passed the federal Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act (Fostering Connections).<sup>6</sup> Fostering Connections was designed to improve outcomes for foster youth by promoting permanency and providing supports to foster youth as they transition to adulthood. Foster youth who leave foster care on or after their 18th birthday have the opportunity to reenter care at any time before their eligibility ends at age 21. Fostering Connections provides states with the option to participate in federally supported extended foster care, adoption assistance, and subsidized guardianship programs for foster youth. For states like California that operated subsidized guardianship programs with state only funds, Fostering Connections provides an opportunity to extend foster care up to age 21 without incurring net state costs by taking advantage of the new federal funding available to support the state's Kin-GAP (subsidized guardianship) program.

### ***Probation Supervised Foster Youth – A Vulnerable Population***

AB 12 is intended to address the challenges facing foster youth, whether probation or child welfare supervised, when they leave the system and transition to independence and adulthood. A study of child welfare and probation supervised youth that exited Los Angeles County's juvenile court system found that youth experience poor outcomes after exiting care and face severe challenges as young adults with respect to education, employment, health, mental health and earning potential.<sup>7</sup> The study revealed that youth exiting supervision from either agency were at high risk for unemployment, homelessness, incarceration, mental health disorders, and lower educational attainment. Surprisingly, probation supervised youth with no recent dependency history had very similar outcomes to foster youth who had experienced only child welfare supervision. Youth that crossed over from dependency to delinquency, however, experienced negative outcomes at twice the rate of youth who came into contact with only one agency. The Los Angeles study confirms that youth exiting probation supervision at age 18 are as vulnerable and their needs are just as great as youth exiting child welfare supervision.

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<sup>4</sup> National Working Group on Foster Care and Education (July 2011). Education is the Lifeline for Youth in Foster Care: Research Highlights on Education and Foster Care.

[http://www.fostercareandeducation.org/portals/0/dmx/2012/08/file\\_20120829\\_140902\\_sAMYaA\\_0.pdf](http://www.fostercareandeducation.org/portals/0/dmx/2012/08/file_20120829_140902_sAMYaA_0.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> See footnote 2, *supra*.

<sup>6</sup> Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008, PL 110–351, October 7, 2008, 122 Stat. 3949.

<sup>7</sup> *Young Adult Outcomes of Youth Exiting Dependent or Delinquent Care in Los Angeles*, Culhane, D.P., et al. (November 2011).

[http://works.bepress.com/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1125&context=dennis\\_culhane](http://works.bepress.com/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1125&context=dennis_culhane).

California recognized years ago that many youth in the delinquency system are in some ways no different from dependent youth. In the early 1980s, California became one of the first states to use Title IV-E federal foster care funding (AFDC-FC) for probation supervised youth placed in non-secure settings.<sup>8</sup> Federal and state law require that probation supervised youth in foster care placements must be treated equitably with their child welfare supervised counterparts and receive the same benefits and protections afforded to all youth in foster care.<sup>9</sup> California's long history of utilizing state and federal foster care funds for youth in the delinquency system in need of non-secure out-of-home placements has provided the foundation for implementation of AB 12 for probation supervised foster youth. AB 12 is a critical vehicle for providing these particularly vulnerable young people with supported opportunities to develop independent living skills, to access training, higher education and employment and to establish lifelong connections with committed caring adults.

### **Data Identification and Collection**

We have identified and analyzed data from statewide data sources, county probation agencies, and a variety of individual juvenile justice system stakeholders. Several statewide data systems exist for tracking foster care and probation involved youth in California. Unfortunately, none of the statewide data systems (separately or in combination) provides a complete picture of probation supervised youth eligible for or participating in extended foster care.

#### ***Foster Care Data***

In the child welfare system, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) is the single state agency responsible for administering child welfare services, including foster care. The California Child Welfare Indicators Project (CCWIP) (a collaboration between the University of California at Berkeley and CDSS) provides comprehensive child welfare administrative data, including foster care data on probation supervised foster youth. The CCWIP data is extracted from the state child welfare system's case management system CWS/CMS. However, probation officers do not have the same access to CWS/CMS that social workers do and do not use the system for case management. Although the CWS/CMS data is comprehensive, researchers have noted that even within and across county child welfare agencies, social workers may vary in how they enter data.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, the probation supervised foster youth data entered by probation into CWS/CMS is likely to be even more variable than the child welfare data.

CCWIP provides access to customizable information including data by supervising agency, age, placement type, and other subcategories, but does not include basic court data tracking probation

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<sup>8</sup> Foster Care: HHS Should Ensure That Juvenile Justice Placements Are Reviewed, United States General Accounting Office (GAO) June 2000 Report, pgs. 4, 8.

<http://www.gao.gov/assets/230/229201.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Welf. & Inst. Code §§ 11403, 16001.9; 42 U.S.C. §§ 671 (a)(10).

<sup>10</sup> Courtney, supra, note 2 at p. 6.

supervised youth who are eligible for, but are not participating in extended foster care.<sup>11</sup> Foster care eligibility is triggered when the court orders placement of the youth under the care, custody and supervision of probation for foster care placement. However, CCWIP only tracks youth once probation initiates the administrative paperwork necessary for placing the youth into foster care and into CWS/CMS and ends if the youth leaves foster care, even when the youth remains on probation. CDSS also tracks child welfare fiscal data, including AB 12 related expenditures, for budget and payment purposes. However, this report does not examine fiscal data or fiscal aspects of AB 12.

### ***Juvenile Justice Data***

California does not have a single state agency responsible for the administration of juvenile justice. Each county probation department operates independently subject only to specific statewide rules or state agency oversight for specific functions. In the juvenile justice system, the Juvenile Court and Probation Statistical System (JCPSS) tracks juvenile probation system information, including probation and court processes from the time of referral to final disposition. The California Department of Justice's Criminal Justice Statistics Center operates JCPSS and collects data from probation departments and law enforcement agencies throughout the state on juvenile arrests and the disposition of each case in the justice system. Although JCPSS provides disposition data, the system does not distinguish foster care placements with relatives or identify all foster care placements in non-group home settings. California also does not have a statewide database for juvenile court information. Instead, each county has its own database for juvenile court information, creating county-level variations in the data collected and the manner in which it is organized.

Assembly Bill 1468 (2014) established the Juvenile Justice Data Working Group within the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) to recommend options for coordinating and modernizing the juvenile justice data systems and reports that are developed and maintained by state and county agencies. In January of 2016, the working group, comprised of juvenile justice system stakeholder representatives from around the state, delivered a report to the Legislature detailing its findings and recommendations.<sup>12</sup> The report concludes that there is no state-level capacity to track important outcomes for juvenile justice system youth and that our state-level juvenile justice data systems are not by design integrated with county-level data systems. The recommendations include a complete overhaul of current statewide data systems like JCPSS, coordination of disparate state data collection into a single agency, and several other measures to improve our antiquated and inefficient system of juvenile justice data collection.

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<sup>11</sup> CCWIP website: [http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb\\_childwelfare/default.aspx](http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare/default.aspx).

<sup>12</sup> [Rebuilding California's Juvenile Justice Data System: Recommendations to Improve Data Collection, Performance Measures and Outcomes for California Youth](#), Juvenile Justice Data Working Group, Board of State and Community Corrections (January 2016).

### ***Project Data Collection***

The project used a variety of informal and formal methods to collect data on probation supervised foster youth in the Bay Area. This report relies on information collected from a wide array of sources. The quantitative data collected from CCWIP (discussed above), focuses on the core six Bay Area counties: Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, San Francisco, San Mateo and Santa Clara. Qualitative data was collected from the core six Bay Area counties in addition to Napa, Solano and Sonoma. Project staff submitted Public Records Act requests to probation departments in each of the nine counties in the Bay Area, requesting policies and procedures governing participation in extended foster care (EFC) by probation-supervised youth, training materials provided to staff, and any documents provided to youth informing them of their rights related to EFC and of resources available due to EFC participation. Project staff reviewed documents provided in response to such requests by Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano, and Sonoma Counties.

In addition, we conducted interviews with various stakeholders around the Bay Area. We spoke with probation officers from Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Mateo, San Francisco, Santa Clara, Solano, and Sonoma Counties; public defenders and panel attorneys from Alameda, Contra Costa, Napa, Riverside, San Francisco, San Mateo, and Sonoma Counties; and individuals working in the dependency system as attorneys and case managers from Alameda, San Francisco and Solano Counties. We also spoke with a number of service providers, including Independent Living Program/Independent Living Service Program (ILP/ILSP) officers from Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, Solano, and Sonoma Counties; transitional housing providers in Alameda and Santa Clara Counties; and Extended Opportunity Programs and Services workers in Alameda, Contra Costa, San Benito, San Mateo, and Santa Clara Counties. Finally, we spoke to youth – including youth working as advocates on EFC issues – from Alameda, Contra Costa, Napa, and Santa Clara Counties.

The unintegrated state and local data sources as well as the disparate data collection methods present policy, practice, and evaluation challenges in examining probation supervised foster youth in extended care. The lack of comprehensive data sources and uniform data collection methods makes it difficult for juvenile justice system practitioners, policy makers, advocates, researchers and other stakeholders to have a complete and accurate picture of the impact of AB 12 on eligible probation supervised youth.

## **Demographics of Youth in Probation Supervised Extended Foster Care**

Probation supervised foster youth are a small portion of the overall foster care population in California.<sup>13</sup> Statewide, as of January 1, 2016, there were 62,148 child welfare supervised foster youth, including 7,622 such youth in EFC, and only 3,866 probation supervised foster youth, including 1,490 in EFC (see charts below). During the first three years of AB 12 implementation, California's child welfare supervised foster care population increased, with the largest gains in the EFC age group (18 to 21). In the fourth year of implementation, the child welfare supervised foster care population decreased by 1% overall, and by 5% in the EFC population.

In contrast, the probation supervised foster care population began to decline after the second year of AB 12 implementation, when one would expect the population to increase with the addition of 20 year olds to EFC eligibility. The probation supervised EFC population decreased by 5% the third year of AB 12 implementation, and decreased by 16% the following year.

Age Group	California Probation Supervised Foster Care - Point In Time					
	1-Jan-11	1-Jan-12	1-Jan-13	1-Jan-14	1-Jan-15	1-Jan-16
	n	n	n	n	n	n
'6-10	1	--	--	2	--	--
'11-15	1,334	1,188	1,080	973	865	638
16-17	2,791	2,700	2,449	2,254	2,145	1,738
18-21	519	763	1,206	1,619	1,598	1,490
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,645</b>	<b>4,651</b>	<b>4,735</b>	<b>4,848</b>	<b>4,608</b>	<b>3,866</b>

Age Group	Probation Supervised Foster Care Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara					
	1-Jan-11	1-Jan-12	1-Jan-13	1-Jan-14	1-Jan-15	1-Jan-16
	n	n	n	n	n	n
'6-10	--	--	--	--	--	--
'11-15	202	170	154	146	142	76
16-17	430	472	413	371	373	259
18-21	88	136	239	361	400	347
<b>Total</b>	<b>720</b>	<b>778</b>	<b>806</b>	<b>878</b>	<b>915</b>	<b>682</b>

<sup>13</sup> All of the quantitative data including charts and tables unless otherwise indicated in the report are from the University of California at Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project (CCWIP) interactive website retrieved in March 2016. CCWIP data is available at [http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb\\_childwelfare](http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare) ("CCWIP report").

Age Group	California Child Welfare Supervised Foster Care					
	1-Jan-11	1-Jan-12	1-Jan-13	1-Jan-14	1-Jan-15	1-Jan-16
	n	n	n	n	n	n
<b>Under 1</b>	3,265	3,203	3,511	3,927	3,947	4,153
<b>'1-2</b>	7,412	7,202	7,374	7,970	8,220	8,418
<b>'3-5</b>	8,619	8,643	8,639	9,264	9,412	9,365
<b>'6-10</b>	11,499	11,273	11,700	12,678	13,294	13,557
<b>'11-15</b>	14,458	13,418	12,841	12,865	12,733	12,421
<b>16-17</b>	8,619	7,868	7,510	7,127	6,923	6,612
<b>18-21</b>	2,670	2,829	4,667	6,738	7,827	7,622
<b>Total</b>	56,542	54,436	56,242	60,569	62,356	62,148

Age Group	Child Welfare Supervised Foster Care (Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara)					
	1-Jan-11	1-Jan-12	1-Jan-13	1-Jan-14	1-Jan-15	1-Jan-16
	n	n	n	n	n	n
<b>Under 1</b>	224	237	295	261	274	300
<b>1-2</b>	481	447	520	533	565	552
<b>3-5</b>	531	537	585	576	622	602
<b>6-10</b>	974	925	928	1,002	1,034	986
<b>11-15</b>	1,599	1,380	1,324	1,271	1,281	1,205
<b>16-17</b>	1,128	1,028	883	795	782	748
<b>18-21</b>	339	383	749	1,104	1,205	1,087
<b>Total</b>	5,276	4,937	5,284	5,542	5,763	5,480

The decline in the probation supervised EFC population is consistent with the overall decline in the number of probation supervised foster youth. However, the number of youth in the 16 to 17 age category and the case closure data discussed below indicate that despite the decline in overall population AB 12 is not being maximized for probation supervised youth. Minors are exiting care before turning 18 and probation youth in EFC are emancipating before aging out of care (see below).

### ***Race/Ethnicity and Gender***

Racial and ethnic disproportionality and disparities in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems are well documented.<sup>14</sup> Not surprisingly, youth of color make up the overwhelming majority of youth in foster care under child welfare supervision (76% statewide and 82.5% in the Bay Area) and probation supervision (81% statewide and 89.2% in the Bay Area).<sup>15</sup> In the EFC population, youth of color make up the overwhelming majority of youth under child welfare supervision (77% statewide and 91% in Bay Area counties) and probation supervision (81% statewide and between 57% and an astonishing 97% in Bay Area counties). African-American youth as well as Native American youth are the two disproportionately represented groups statewide in probation supervised EFC and both groups are disproportionately represented in each of the Bay Area counties. Latinos are also disproportionately represented in probation supervised populations in San Francisco, San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties. Young men are disproportionately represented, although young women have become a larger percentage of the EFC population since the inception of AB 12.

Ethnic Group	Probation Supervised Foster Youth EFC						
	Alameda	Contra Costa	Marin	San Francisco	San Mateo	Santa Clara	CA
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<b>Black</b>	73	45.2	33.3	58.6	14.3	9.5	33.1
<b>White</b>	3.1	19.2	22.2	4.3	42.9	19	19.2
<b>Latino</b>	19	32.9	44.4	27.1	42.9	66.7	44
<b>Asian/P.I.</b>	4.3	2.7	--	8.6	--	4.8	2.4
<b>Nat Amer</b>	0.6	--	--	1.4	--	--	1.3

Ethnic Group	California Population Age 18-21						
	Alameda	Contra Costa	Marin	San Francisco	San Mateo	Santa Clara	CA
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<b>Black</b>	12.9	9.9	2.8	8.9	2.5	2.2	6.1
<b>White</b>	24	38.3	62.2	18.3	33.9	27.5	29.6
<b>Latino</b>	30.1	31.8	22.9	22.1	34.2	35.8	48.1
<b>Asian/P.I.</b>	26.5	13.6	6	46	23.4	29.6	12
<b>Nat Amer</b>	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.4

<sup>14</sup> Racial and Ethnic Disparity and Disproportionality in Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice: A Compendium, Center for Juvenile Justice Reform, Georgetown Public Policy Institute and Chapin Hall, University of Chicago (2009).

<sup>15</sup> CCWIP reports.

Gender	California Point In Time						
	1-Jan-10	1-Jan-11	1-Jan-12	1-Jan-13	1-Jan-14	1-Jan-15	1-Jan-16
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<b>Female</b>	14.9	18.9	19.4	21.2	22.5	24.8	25.4
<b>Male</b>	85.1	81.1	80.6	78.8	77.5	75.2	74.6

County/State	Probation Supervised Females in EFC				
	1/1/12	1/1/13	1/1/14	1/1/15	1/1/16
	%	% M/F	% M/F	% M/F	% M/F
<b>Alameda</b>	11.8	24.7	24	26.4	22.9
<b>Contra Costa</b>	17.6	13	15	17.9	21.6
<b>Marin</b>	50	40	36.4	61.5	44.4
<b>San Francisco</b>	25.9	25.4	26.1	27.2	22.9
<b>San Mateo</b>	80	50	28.6	22.2	28.6
<b>Santa Clara</b>	0	12.5	11.1	29.2	38.1
<b>California</b>	19.4	21.2	22.5	24.8	25.4

### **Placement Type**

For the most part, young people in EFC who are supervised by probation reside in group homes, SILPs and Transitional Housing, rather than foster family homes and kinship placements.

Although group homes are restricted to youth under age 19 who have not graduated from high school (with exceptions for youth with disabilities or conditions that require continuation in group care as they transition to adult systems of care), a significant portion of EFC probation supervised youth live in group homes. Statewide, more than half of probation supervised EFC youth live in group homes. The percentage of EFC youth under probation supervision in group homes varies in the Bay Area, ranging from 0% in Marin, to 26% in San Francisco, with 72% in Contra Costa probation reported data. The low percentage of probation supervised EFC youth placed in foster family, kinship or other family home placements is not surprising given that minors under probation supervision are currently almost exclusively placed in group homes. Additionally, it may be more advantageous for a youth to be in a SILP within a kinship home or foster home rather than to be placed with a kinship caregiver or foster parent, as a young person can receive the foster care payment directly if placed in a SILP.

Probation supervised youth in the Bay Area use the supervised independent living placement settings – transitional housing and SILPs – more than probation supervised EFC youth statewide. Transitional housing placements have increased over the years as the number of transitional housing beds has expanded. The Bay Area is home to more transitional housing beds than many other regions in the state. Probation supervised foster youth in the Bay Area use the transitional

housing option more than probation or child welfare supervised youth in EFC statewide. The use of SILPs among probation supervised youth does not match the frequency that their child welfare counterparts use this placement type, but Bay Area probation supervised youth are placed in SILPs at more than twice the statewide rate for probation EFC youth. Statewide, 42.4% of child welfare supervised youth in EFC are in SILPs, yet the available data reflects that only 8% of probation supervised youth in EFC use this option. In the Bay Area, the use of SILPs among probation supervised youth varies widely ranging from 7% in Contra Costa to 71% in San Mateo.<sup>16</sup>

Placement Type	Probation Supervised EFC California				
	1-Jan-12	1-Jan-13	1-Jan-14	1-Jan-15	1-Jan-16
	%	%	%	%	%
<b>Kin</b>	3.4	3.2	2.6	2.9	2.9
<b>Foster</b>	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.2	2.9
<b>FFA</b>	1.2	0.8	1	0.8	0.6
<b>Group</b>	53.5	50.7	47.6	46.7	50.1
<b>Transitional Housing</b>	0.4	0.5	1.6	5.1	6.9
<b>SILP</b>	0	3.1	6.5	8	8.8
Placement Type	Probation Supervised EFC Bay 6 Counties				
	1-Jan-12	1-Jan-13	1-Jan-14	1-Jan-15	1-Jan-16
	%	%	%	%	%
<b>Kin</b>	0.7	1.3	0.8	0.5	0.3
<b>Foster</b>	--	---	---	--	--
<b>FFA</b>	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Group</b>	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Transitional Housing</b>	0.4	0.5	1.6	5.1	6.9
<b>SILP</b>	0	3.1	6.5	8	8.8

Placement Type	Child Welfare Supervised EFC California				
	1-Jan-12	1-Jan-13	1-Jan-14	1-Jan-15	1-Jan-16
	%	%	%	%	%
<b>Kin</b>	26.3	17.9	10.5	8.3	7.8
<b>Foster</b>	8.5	5.3	3.7	2.2	2.2
<b>FFA</b>	22.5	16	11.7	9.2	8.4
<b>Group</b>	10.3	7	4.8	4.2	4.1
<b>Transitional Housing</b>	3.1	2.6	8.3	13.4	15.5
<b>SILP</b>	0.8	22.5	39.9	42.3	42.4
Placement Type	Child Welfare Supervised EFC Bay 6 Counties				
	1-Jan-12	1-Jan-13	1-Jan-14	1-Jan-15	1-Jan-16
	%	%	%	%	%
<b>Kin</b>	28.2	15.9	9.3	7.3	5
<b>Foster</b>	8.4	4.1	2.6	1.7	1.8
<b>FFA</b>	19.6	12.8	9.3	7.2	6.4
<b>Group</b>	14.4	6.5	3.7	3.7	5.2
<b>Transitional Housing</b>	7.8	8	21.1	27.7	28.2
<b>SILP</b>	0.8	29.6	41.5	41.4	42.6

<sup>16</sup> The CWS/CMS placement data for Contra Costa reports no probation supervised youth in SILPs as of January 1, 2016. However, Contra Costa Probation in response to a public records request verified that 7% of EFC youth are placed in SILPs. The placement data from statewide systems is in contrast with the reports of many Bay Area stakeholders that probation supervised youth heavily rely on SILPs. The reason for the discrepancy between the collected data and the stakeholder reports is unclear. However, the difference between self-reported and CWS/CMS data for Contra Costa County suggests that the discrepancy may be due to above-noted lack of clarity and discrepancies in data reporting processes.

Placement Type	Probation Supervised EFC Bay 6 Counties				
	1- Jan- 12	1- Jan- 13	1- Jan- 14	1- Jan- 15	1- Jan- 16
	%	%	%	%	%
<b>Kin</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.3</b>
<b>Foster</b>	--	---	---	--	--
<b>FFA</b>	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Group</b>	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Transitional Housing</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>6.9</b>
<b>SILP</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8.8</b>

Placement Type	Probation Supervised Youth 1/1/16					
	AlaCo	CoCo*	Marin	SF	SM	SC
	%	%	%	%	%	
<b>Kin/Guardian</b>	.6	--	11.1	--	--	--
<b>Foster Family Home</b>	--	--	--	--	--	--
<b>FFA Certified Home</b>	--	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Group</b>	15.1	18.9	--	25.7	14.3	9.5
<b>Transitional Housing</b>	26.5	32.4	11.1	14.3	-	28.6
<b>SILP</b>	24.1	--	66.7	35.7	71.4	19

\*CoCo County provided data: SILP = 7%; Transitional Housing =20%; Group =7% as of 10/9/15  
Placement data does not include youth not in eligible placements (e.g., AWOL, trial home visit)

### **Outcomes for Probation Supervised Youth Exiting EFC**

Probation departments are required to report to CDSS quarterly certain education, employment, housing and permanency information on youth exiting EFC. Through three quarters of 2015, the statewide numbers reveal mixed outcomes for probation youth exiting last year. For youth

whose whereabouts were known, only 52% were high school graduates and 38% were employed either full or part time. Although over 80% had housing arrangements, 32% were living rent free indicating possible housing instability. Overall, data reports indicate that 80% of youth had a permanency connection, although the nature of this relationship was not clearly defined.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> CCWIP SOC 405XP reports-exit outcomes.

## Case Closure and Reentry

Probation supervised foster youth in EFC are leaving care before aging out and are not reentering care. More than half of child welfare supervised youth in EFC statewide age out of care (55%), yet only 14% of probation supervised youth exiting EFC in 2015 aged out. In the Bay Area, the difference between child welfare and probation supervised youth in EFC is even starker. In 2015, 70% of child welfare supervised youth in EFC aged out of care compared to only 12% of probation supervised youth. Very few youth reenter care whether supervised by probation or child welfare. However, child welfare supervised youth in EFC are more likely to stay in care until emancipation.

County/State	Probation EFC Voluntary Reentry			
	JAN2012- DEC2012	JAN2013- DEC2013	JAN2014- DEC2014	JAN2015- DEC2015
	n	n	n	n
Alameda	--	--	--	7
Contra Costa	--	2	--	--
Marin	--	4	3	3
San Francisco	--	--	1	--
San Mateo	--	--	--	--
Santa Clara	1	--	--	--
Bay 6 Total	1	6	4	10
California	15	62	97	113

County/State	Child Welfare EFC Voluntary Reentry			
	JAN2012- DEC2012	JAN2013- DEC2013	JAN2014- DEC2014	JAN2015- DEC2015
	n	n	n	n
Alameda	--	--	2	20
Contra Costa	6	4	2	2
Marin	--	--	--	--
San Francisco	9	10	8	5
San Mateo--	--	--	6	3
Santa Clara	5	13	16	18
Bay 6 Total	20	27	34	48
California	147	288	367	385

Case Closure Reason	Probation Supervised EFC California			
	JAN2012- DEC2012	JAN2013- DEC2013	JAN2014- DEC2014	JAN2015- DEC2015
	%	%	%	%
Family Stabilized	0.1	.	0.1	0.1
Court Ordered Termination	31.8	36.4	35.1	36.1
Reunification	23.9	22.7	25.8	24.6
Adoption	--	0.1	0.1	--
Guardianship	0.1	--	--	--
Age/Emancipation	22	20.3	9.8	14
Refused Services	3.9	5.2	1	0.8
Exceeded Time Limits	4.6	0.3	0.2	3.3
NMD/NRLG Eligible for Reentry	0.9	5.4	7.7	10.1
Criminal Justice Involvement	8	4.9	8.3	5.4
Other	4.8	4.8	12	5.6
<b>Total</b>	100	100	100	100

Case Closure Reason	Probation Supervised EFC Bay 6 Counties			
	JAN2012- DEC2012	JAN2013- DEC2013	JAN2014- DEC2014	JAN2015- DEC2015
	%	%	%	%
Family Stabilized	--	--	--	--
Court Ordered Termination	30.9	38.4	22.7	23.7
Reunification	51.4	37.9	40.7	35.9
Adoption	--	--	--	--
Guardianship	--	--	--	--
Age/Emancipation	6.6	1.9	6.2	12.5
Refused Services	--	0.9	0.7	1.1
Exceeded Time Limits	--	--	--	--
NMD/NRLG Eligible for Reentry	1.1	6.2	8.4	12.2
Criminal Justice Involvement	7.2	9.5	8.8	4.5
Other	2.8	5.2	12.5	10.1
Missing	--	--	--	--
<b>Total</b>	100	100	100	100

Case Closure Reason	Child Welfare Supervised California			
	JAN2012- DEC2012	JAN2013- DEC2013	JAN2014- DEC2014	JAN2015- DEC2015
	%	%	%	%
Family Stabilized	7.1	6	3.9	2.6
Court Ordered Termination	29.4	29.8	26.1	20.5
Reunification	1.4	1.8	1.2	0.8
Adoption	1.5	0.9	1.1	0.5
Guardianship	0.5	0.3	0.6	0.6
Age/Emancipation	49.4	40.2	46.3	55.2
Refused Services	1.7	2.3	2.4	2
Exceeded Time Limits	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.5
NMD/NRLG Eligible for Reentry	5.8	14.8	15.2	15.4
Criminal Justice Involvement	0.8	1.1	0.8	0.4
Other	1.9	2.1	1.8	1.4

Case Closure Reason	Child Welfare Supervised EFC Bay 6 Counties			
	JAN2012- DEC2012	JAN2013- DEC2013	JAN2014- DEC2014	JAN2015- DEC2015
	%	%	%	%
Family Stabilized	15.3	15.6	7	4
Court Ordered Termination	6.1	8.8	8.4	7.7
Reunification	0.4	1.5	0.5	1.5
Adoption	2.7	0.5	1.2	0.2
Guardianship	1.1	0.5	1.2	0.6
Age/Emancipation	62.5	47.8	63.1	69.8
Refused Services	2.7	3.4	5	2.1
Exceeded Time Limits	0.4		1.2	0.2
NMD/NRLG Eligible for Reentry	3.8	12.2	6.7	10.3
Criminal Justice Involvement	1.9	2.9	1.9	0.5
Other	3.1	6.8	3.8	3.2

**Serving Probation Supervised Youth in Extended Foster Care: Barriers, Best Practices, and Recommendations**

*Ensuring Eligibility*

A young person’s eligibility to participate in EFC turns on the existence of a foster care placement order when he or she turns 18. The order is the only eligibility requirement that cannot be cured after the youth’s 18th birthday. Therefore, it is incumbent upon those involved in a youth’s case to ensure that appropriate orders are being made, and that young people who belong in the foster care system and who could benefit from the support provided through EFC are not excluded from eligibility because they do not have the required placement order.

For some probation supervised youth, barriers to establishing eligibility for EFC still exist. One common problem is the failure to make a placement order in situations where a young person is released into the community to live with a relative or with fictive kin, rather than with his or her parents. In such situations, where the court, attorneys, and case managers all agree that a youth should live with someone other than his or her parents, the situation should be recognized for what it truly is: a foster care placement. The failure to do so leaves young people without the possibility of entering EFC at 18, and deprives both them and the relatives with whom they live of the benefits of foster care status. In general, probation departments around the Bay Area severely underutilize community-based family placements, despite a growing recognition that such placements are both developmentally healthier for young people and more cost-effective.

Placement Type	Probation Supervised Children in Foster Care California <sup>18</sup>				
	1/1/12	1/1/13	1/1/14	1/1/15	1/1/16
	%	%	%	%	%
<b>Kin</b>	3.4	3.2	2.6	2.9	2.9
<b>Foster Family Home</b>	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.1
<b>FFA Certified Home</b>	1.2	0.8	1	0.8	0.6
<b>Court Specified Home</b>	0.7	1.3	1.9	1.6	0.9
<b>Group</b>	53.5	50.7	47.6	46.7	50.1
<b>Transitional Housing</b>	0.4	0.5	1.6	5.1	6.9
<b>SILP</b>	0	3.1	6.5	8	8.8

<sup>18</sup> California Child Welfare Indicators Project (CCWIP) University of California at Berkeley- CWS/CMS 2015 Quarter 4 Extract.

Placement Type	Probation Supervised Children in Foster Care Bay 6 Counties				
	1/1/12	1/1/13	1/1/14	1/1/15	1/1/16
	%	%	%	%	%
<b>Kin</b>	0.5	0.9	0.6	0.4	0.4
<b>Foster Family Home</b>	0.3	0.2	--	0.1	0.1
<b>FFA Certified Home</b>	0.3	0.5	0.6	0.3	0.1
<b>Court Specified Home</b>	--	0.5	0.5	0.2	0.1
<b>Group</b>	50.9	48.6	44.5	40.7	43.3
<b>Shelter</b>	--	0.1	--	--	0.1
<b>Transitional Housing</b>	0.9	0.7	2.2	8.4	12.6
<b>SILP</b>	--	2.4	7.2	9.1	11.7

Advocates from Bay Area Legal Aid<sup>19</sup> identified this as an ongoing issue in all Bay Area counties, although attorneys in Alameda County stated that many youth in Alameda do have placement orders in this situation. Advocates identified the issue as based, in large part, on probation departments' lack of familiarity and comfort with family placements and lack of connections to foster family agencies. One attorney in San Mateo also identified this as an issue. She recalled one instance in which she sought a placement order for a client who was returning from a county camp to live with a relative and was told by the judge that her client "hadn't earned it."

Other advocates identified a more pernicious issue around eligibility. Attorneys in San Mateo reported their perception that the probation department discourages youth from becoming AB 12 eligible by seeking to terminate placement orders shortly before the youth's 18th birthday. Attorneys indicated that youth are told that they can have probation terminated at the same time – a difficult inducement for young people to resist. One attorney recalled a case in which a youth who had been in placement for four years had his placement order terminated only a few months before his 18th birthday. It is unlikely that youth understand the full consequences of this decision.

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<sup>19</sup> Bay Area Legal Aid is a legal services organization that houses the Youth Justice Project, which provides disadvantaged youth around the Bay Area with supports, services, and legal representation, including assistance in accessing EFC.

State/County	Probation Supervised Foster Youth Age 17			
	JAN2012- DEC2012	JAN2013- DEC2013	JAN2014- DEC2014	JAN2015- DEC2015
	n	n	n	n
California	1,625	1,539	1,507	1,363
Alameda	139	139	128	90
Contra Costa	19	38	61	55
Marin	9	10	9	5
San Francisco	44	25	36	49
San Mateo	13	8	5	4
Santa Clara	30	20	24	20

State/County	Probation Supervised Foster Youth Age 17 Foster Care Case Closures			
	JAN2012- DEC2012	JAN2013- DEC2013	JAN2014- DEC2014	JAN2015- DEC2015
	n	n	n	n
California	1,203	1,148	869	840
Alameda	65	47	54	57
Contra Costa	11	20	22	30
Marin	8	6	4	3
San Francisco	12	9	4	11
San Mateo	4	8	3	4
Santa Clara	24	21	9	18

Statewide, the number of foster care case closures for probation supervised foster youth at age 17 has dropped since the first year of AB 12 implementation. In 2012, case closures for 17-year-olds were seventy four percent (74%) of the probation supervised foster care caseload age 17. For 2015, case closures dropped to sixty-one percent (61%). However, in San Mateo County, the perception regarding case terminations at age 17 appears to be the reality. In the last three years, San Mateo had almost as many case closures for 17-year-olds (fifteen) as 17-year-olds in probation supervised foster care (seventeen).

Several best practices in this area, however, have emerged:

***Best Practices:***

1. **Increased use of placement orders:** Attorneys and advocates in Alameda County and San Francisco reported efforts to increase the use of placement orders and access to EFC for probation-supervised youth. One Alameda public defender stated that it was rare that a young person would go home with a relative without a placement order. A San Francisco public defender stated that when youth go to live with relatives, it is done via a placement order.

Efforts to increase the use of relative placements – as well as nonrelated extended family member (NREFM) and foster family placements – are beneficial for several reasons. Of course, it preserves a youth’s eligibility for EFC. It also provides the support of foster care services to the youth and his family, improving the relative’s ability to care for the youth and decreasing the likelihood that a placement will disrupt and a youth will move into more restrictive settings. When a relative placement succeeds, a young person is less likely to face the problem, discussed below, of scarcity in placements for youth in EFC, as a youth placed in a family is more likely to have the option to remain in the home after reaching 18. Finally, a theme that emerged repeatedly in discussions with stakeholders is that a lack of stable and supportive relationships creates a significant barrier to young people’s success in EFC. A family-based placement can provide such a supportive relationship.

2. **Attorneys advocating for eligibility:** Some attorneys, including attorneys from Contra Costa and San Mateo counties, indicated that maintaining eligibility for EFC helped to shape their dispositional advocacy.

With the advent of the Continuum of Care Reform and the move toward decreased use of congregate care settings for foster youth, probation departments will need to learn to use community-based, family settings for the youth they supervise. We believe this will have the additional effect of increasing probation supervised youth’s participation and success in EFC, as increased numbers of youth will be eligible and will benefit from the supportive relationships that can only be nurtured in a family. Probation practice should reflect the clear research that shows supportive and nurturing adult relationships and parenting are the single most powerful interventions and protective factors that facilitate success across every domain of transition to adulthood for these youth.

***Recommendations:***

1. Training for probation departments in the benefits of family-based placements, in how to use family-based placement resources, in family finding, in techniques such as child-specific recruitment and in permanency planning. In addition, we recommend facilitating relationships between probation departments, child welfare agencies, and FFAs.
2. Development of training for FFAs and foster parents on how to parent and support probation-supervised foster youth, including training on the juvenile justice system in general. This training can dispel myths and misconceptions and highlight the developmental research supporting the power of family care as a highly effective intervention for probation-supervised youth.

## Lack of Available Placements and Placement Instability

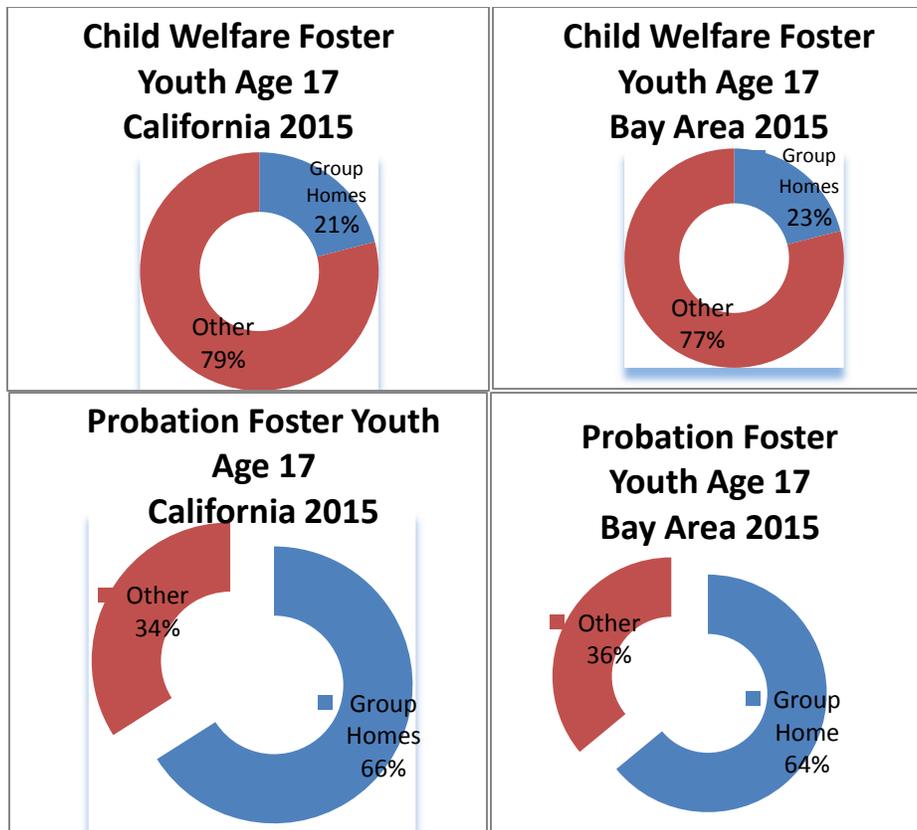
### *Obtaining a Placement*

Nearly every attorney, probation officer, and service provider working with probation supervised youth in EFC raised the issue of lack of available placements. Unsurprisingly, given the high cost of housing in the Bay Area, difficulty in accessing EFC-eligible housing is a serious problem for all youth in EFC. The number of youth in EFC in the Bay Area far exceeds the capacity of THP+FC providers,<sup>20</sup> with housing programs in Alameda County reporting a wait of up to four months for beds to become available. Nor are SILPs always obtainable for youth in EFC, as rents in the Bay Area often far exceed the current monthly SILP stipend.

The problem is significantly exacerbated for probation-supervised youth, who are more likely than their child welfare supervised peers to turn 18 in a group home. Statewide, 66% of 17 year olds in probation supervised foster care are in group home placements compared to only 21% of child welfare supervised foster youth. The experience of probation and child welfare supervised foster youth in the Bay Area is similar at 64% and 23%, respectively. Kinship and foster family placements have the built-in advantage of developing permanent connections, supportive relationships and a transitional placement setting for youth in EFC. Youth living in foster family and relative placements prior to turning 18 often can remain in those family based settings as a regular foster care placement or as a SILP. Furthermore, youth in family based settings are less isolated, and have more opportunities to develop supportive relationships with adults in the community outside of the foster care system. Child welfare supervised youth are also more likely to receive permanency planning to develop and maintain life-long connections with caring supportive adults. The disconnect between the CCWIP data indicating that over 80% of probation-supervised youth had a permanency connection and the large number of these youth living in congregate care or a non-family based setting indicates more work on permanency planning with probation would be helpful.

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<sup>20</sup> THP+FC is a transitional housing placement for child welfare and probation supervised foster youth in EFC.



In addition, THP+FC beds may be more difficult for probation-supervised youth to obtain. Many applications for THP+FC beds require information about delinquency and criminal history. For example, the Next Steps Collaborative, which consists of five THP+FC programs that comprise the bulk of such housing in Alameda County, has a joint application that requests a release for the agencies to discuss an applicant’s delinquency history. Some youth are reluctant to provide such a release, which can impede their application.

Furthermore, advocates in some counties reported that probation-supervised youth are, essentially, on their own in finding a placement once they reach 18. Advocates reported a common misconception on the part of probation departments that because youth in EFC are legally adults, they are responsible for finding their own placements.

The lack of available transitional housing beds leaves many youth relying on SILPs for housing. Although SILPs can be a good placement for many youth – who are often weary and wary of living in supervised settings with strangers – over-reliance on SILPs can also cause significant problems for this population. The reluctance on the part of probation departments to provide help in finding youth placements is exacerbated in the case of SILPs, with no probation department reporting that they provide young people help in finding housing that could qualify as a SILP beyond discussing potential adults with whom a youth could stay.

Moreover, the timeline for receiving payment once a young person has found a SILP is protracted. Even if a SILP is approved quickly, foster care payments are always one month

behind since they are paid on the first of the month for the prior month. Furthermore, payment can take 8 weeks to reach a youth. Therefore, if a young person is unable to afford to pay a security deposit and up to three month's rent without assistance – or to find a friend or relative willing to allow him or her to stay without paying rent – he or she will be unable to secure a SILP. Even where a young person has a friend or relative willing to house him (which, as discussed above, poses special challenges for probation supervised youth), the youth's inability to pay rent can strain relations, making the placement more likely to fail and sending the youth on another difficult hunt for housing.

One youth from Contra Costa who had difficulty obtaining a stable placement while in EFC noted that one of the goals of program was to prevent homelessness, and wondered why, if that was the case, it was only possible to get financial assistance once she had already found a place. She suggested that youth be provided with up-front financial assistance that would allow them to pay a security deposit and first month's rent. Her concern was echoed by youth in Santa Clara and Napa counties.

### *Placement Disruption and Instability*

Even when youth succeed in finding a placement, youth continue to experience placement disruption and instability. These problems, again, are exacerbated for probation-supervised youth for several reasons. This instability makes it more difficult for youth to achieve education and employment goals.

Although placement instability is an issue for many youth in extended foster care, probation supervised youth face special challenges that can make keeping a placement more difficult. One issue, discussed in more detail below, is the simple fact of probation involvement. Young people who continue to be subject to terms and conditions of probation can find that even a short stay in detention for an alleged probation violation can result in a loss of THP+FC housing.

Another difficulty facing probation-supervised youth is a lack of housing that provides services and supports necessary to successfully transition back into the community after extended stays in often-isolated group homes. Neither group homes nor many THP+FC placements offer youth assistance in the transition from a highly structured, institutional environment to a more independent setting. Advocates, attorneys, and probation officers around the Bay Area noted a serious lack of THP+FC programs providing services for youth with higher levels of need. As a result, young people with the most serious needs for supportive services are subjected to longer waits for placement or may be placed in an environment that does not provide the necessary supports. These youth then face a greater risk of losing transitional housing – often with as little as seven days' notice, leaving youth scrambling to find a safe place to stay. One youth reported that when he was transitioned from a group home which operated with a high level of structure directly to a transitional housing placement that had very little, he struggled to successfully adjust and remain focused on his goals.

When a placement does disrupt, few counties have effective transition or emergency placements that provide youth with a safe place to stay while searching for a more permanent placement. Some counties, including San Francisco, have no protocol for helping probation-supervised

youth obtain emergency housing. Other counties, including Contra Costa and Solano, rely on homeless shelters to provide emergency shelter. Without effective emergency planning, youth are seriously at risk of becoming homeless – and once youth are homeless, advocates report, reconnecting them to placement is more difficult, as such youth are difficult to reach and may miss transitional housing openings that become available. Probation youth are especially at risk, as youth and advocates around the Bay Area report that probation officers are reluctant to provide assistance in securing a new placement once the first placement has failed or lack the knowledge and skills to provide youth with emergency housing assistance.

Placement instability is problematic not only because it places youth at serious risk of homelessness, but also because instability – even repeated transitions between placements with no period of homelessness – makes it more difficult for youth to achieve their education and employment goals. As one youth advocate in Alameda County put it, when a youth does not have stable housing, he or she is in crisis mode and school and work become secondary. A social worker in San Francisco wondered how we can expect youth to be consistent with school or work when they are constantly having to move. Having to move repeatedly can also create a barrier to accessing services, including transportation issues to old services and difficulty locating services in a new city or county. This inability to access services and to engage with school or employment can have especially serious consequences for probation supervised youth, who may be required to attend counseling or school as a term of probation and can face a probation violation when a move interferes with these requirements. Ironically, youth who struggle to maintain school attendance or employment while searching for stable housing may face the termination of their EFC benefits, although they are the very population of youth to which was designed to offer a safety net.

***Best Practices:***

1. **Contracting for emergency EFC-eligible beds:** Sonoma County has put into place contracts with community providers to create emergency, short-term shelter beds that are able to be approved as SILPs. This ensures that young people in a housing crisis can be referred to an EFC-eligible placement and that they can maintain eligibility while searching for more permanent housing.
2. **A collaborative approach for youth in a housing crisis:** In Santa Clara County, when a youth appears at risk for being terminated from a THP+FC program, probation officers will schedule a multidisciplinary team meeting to attempt to put a behavioral contract in place that will address the behaviors leading to termination and, ideally, permit the youth to continue in his current placement. Where a placement cannot be continued, the probation officer works with the county child welfare office to obtain an alternative placement and explore the possibility of a SILP with the youth. When all else fails, Santa Clara probation officers can work with Sobrato House, which offers emergency EFC-eligible shelter for limited periods of time. The ability to draw on a coordinated, county-wide system allows Santa Clara probation officers to provide youth in crisis with options.

### ***Recommendations:***

1. Case managers should work with youth to identify an appropriate first EFC placement at least six months prior to the youth's 18th birthday. Given the lengthy waiting lists for transitional housing programs, case managers must submit applications for such programs well in advance of the date that the youth is likely to need such housing.
2. The youth's current placement should be a part of this planning process and take responsibility for developing the supportive programming and services that will help youth successfully transition to a more independent setting. Placements should provide developmentally appropriate services to youth that ensure that their educational, relational, social, normalcy and developmental needs are met and that they are not prevented from practicing the key developmental tasks and experiences that might assist with the transition to EFC.
3. Case managers should provide financial assistance for youth seeking SILPs. Although the original vision for SILPs was that they would be appropriate for youth who are transitioning to full independence and who have saved enough to be able to afford initial move-in costs, we must recognize that probation supervised youth are often placed in SILPs for lack of more supportive options. Such youth need and deserve financial support when searching for safe housing in the Bay Area's challenging rental market. In addition, case managers and service providers should connect youth with community programs that provide first and last month's rent and other forms of housing assistance.
4. Probation departments must work with providers to develop housing placements that support probation-supervised youth, including family-based placements, and to develop emergency housing protocols that comply with the law and can support youth in transition.
5. Probation departments must educate case managers about requirements and options for emergency housing and placement of youth in EFC.
6. Strong collaborations with community, faith and service organizations, including mental health and substance abuse supports, must be developed to provide youth living in SILPs with "wrap around" services to help them adjust to healthy life in the community and successfully engage in school and employment.

### ***Remaining on Probation While Participating in EFC***

We did not find evidence that participating in EFC significantly increases the length of time spent under terms and conditions of probation or the incidence of probation violations,<sup>21</sup> in part because Bay Area probation departments generally do not track data as to length of probation

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<sup>21</sup> One individual working in San Francisco shared that she believed that San Francisco's system – which prohibits youth currently on probation from participating in EFC – might shorten time spent on probation, because parties were eager to get youth off of probation and into EFC.

terms. However, we did find concerns that being on probation can make it more difficult for youth to succeed in EFC. Just as with child welfare supervised youth, transition is a time when probation supervised youth often exhibit behaviors that reflect the physical, emotional, developmental, and social effects of early trauma, abuse, and neglect. However, issues that might result in a child welfare supervised youth being referred for additional services can result in a probation supervised youth spending time in detention – and as a result, having his housing, work, and education significantly disrupted.

This issue was a major concern for youth participating in EFC. One youth interviewed related that he was on probation and then he tested positive for drugs. This resulted in him being detained and losing EFC eligibility. Another youth interviewed emphasized that even being suspected and eventually cleared of having violated probation can wreak havoc with a young person's goals: an employer might be unwilling to let someone take time off of work to attend court hearings and a short stay in detention can lead to lost housing and all of the instability that results. This youth stated that having to “start over” repeatedly as educational and work goals are disrupted by probation involvement can lead to discouragement and an understandable reluctance to initiate new education and employment plans. This youth recommended that decisions to file probation violations be subject to review by a probation supervisor.

Even where youth participation in EFC is not impacted by an actual probation violation, the existence of terms of probation can create a barrier and prevent youth from seeking needed help. Young people who have been ordered not to use drugs are often reluctant to seek referrals to substance abuse counseling from probation officers in the understandable and often-justified belief that reaching out for help will result in a probation violation, extension of probation, and more onerous terms. Youth who are required to attend school may be reluctant to seek help in enrolling for fear of exposing their lack of attendance. Youth's reluctance to seek help is coupled with some probation officers' tendency, discussed in more detail below, to see such issues through a law enforcement rather than supportive lens. The result is that probation youth access services less frequently and are at greater risk of facing termination from EFC because of a failure to fulfill participation conditions, lost housing, or adult criminal involvement.

Service providers also observed the disruptive nature of being on probation. One EOPS program officer noted that she had seen youth become involved in the justice system, and then drop classes and disappear. Another noted that youth subject to terms of probation seem to have less independence and that this causes difficulty in participating in education. A third noted that probation supervised youth in his program have had more court dates, and that this is disruptive because they miss more classes. One ILP staffer stated that some youth on probation have stay-away orders that make it difficult to participate in school and attend events in the community for fear of violating probation by coming into contact with the subject of the order.

Stepping back even further, the fact of being on probation creates a firm barrier for youth in San Francisco and Sonoma Counties. In these counties, unlike other Bay Area counties, probation departments and courts have taken the position that youth who are on probation are not eligible to participate in EFC until they meet rehabilitative goals and have their probation terminated. In these counties, young people who leave group homes without their probation being terminated are sent back into the community without the support of EFC services. They may spend months

living with relatives or in THP+ housing<sup>22</sup> (and, in the process, exhausting THP+ eligibility that could be useful when they exit EFC) before being permitted to access EFC.

***Best Practices:***

1. **Timely termination of probation that maintains EFC eligibility:** In Alameda and Marin County, youth rarely remain on probation once they have left a group home. Youth remain on probation most frequently in situations where they do not have housing in place when they turn 18. This practice recognizes that the barriers created by probation supervision often outweigh the value to the youth and community of retaining probation terms. It also recognizes that youth participating in EFC have often spent extensive periods in group home placements that are tasked with providing rehabilitative and supportive services.
2. **Dedicated EFC Public Defenders:** Alameda, Contra Costa, and San Francisco Public Defenders have attorneys assigned to represent the entire caseload of youth in extended foster care. This system allows public defenders to develop expertise in serving these youth, create relationships with service providers, and litigate probation violations with knowledge of the intersection with EFC. Even where another juvenile attorney keeps a client in extended foster care with whom he or she has developed a close relationship, the existence of dedicated attorneys ensures a base of knowledge to help others in the office. In Contra Costa, the attorney representing this population also provides an array of civil legal services, including education, employment, and record sealing, to youth impacted by their juvenile record. This practice allows the attorney to build a knowledge base that will aid her EFC clients.

***Recommendations:***

1. Probation should be terminated for youth participating in EFC once they leave a group home placement except in unusual circumstances. Once probation is terminated, probation must ensure youth are successfully moved to transition dependent status.
2. If youth remain on probation while participating in EFC, probation departments or attorneys should seek modifications of probation terms that respond to the needs of youth. For example, curfews should be relaxed to permit youth to take jobs that require work at night and requirements to attend counseling should take into account new challenges around transportation.
3. Probation departments should develop written policies requiring that referrals to services be provided prior to filing a probation violation. In particular, policies should require that young people be referred to substance abuse treatment services and provided an opportunity to engage with such services prior to the filing of a violation based on a

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<sup>22</sup> THP+ housing, designated for former foster youth (and as of last year some homeless transition age youth) who are not in foster care under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court, serves young adults up to age 25, but eligibility is limited to a total of 24 months.

positive drug test. Such policies should specify that a probation violation will not be filed if a youth engages with services.

4. Probation departments should create written policies specifying that when a youth is participating in transitional housing, any probation violations that are filed should be filed on an out-of-custody basis to avoid the loss of housing pending adjudication of the violation.

### *Supervision by Probation*

Success in extended foster care depends in large part on the existence of a positive relationship with the case manager. This relationship is important in a variety of ways. Practically, a youth must remain in regular contact with his or her case manager, as failure to maintain contact can result in termination from EFC. Case managers are also responsible for verifying that a youth is fulfilling one of the required participation conditions and for providing services and supports to help young people maintain eligibility and reach the goals outlined in their TILPs. A positive relationship with a competent case manager can help young people access foster care educational benefits that they might not otherwise have been aware of, referrals to mental and physical health services, job training, and other supportive services, aid in an immediate crisis (for example, lost housing), and options when they face difficulties in school or at work. For example, it is common for a young person to struggle in their first semester of college. A young person with a supportive relationship with her case manager might be provided with transit vouchers to help her get to class, connections to EOPS programs on campus that provide academic counseling and tutoring services, and help in obtaining financial aid – supports that help her succeed in school. A young person without such a relationship may not find these supports on her own and may end up, in a worst-case scenario, dropping out of school, losing contact with her case manager, and eventually being terminated from EFC.

In most Bay Area counties – with the exception of San Francisco – probation officers continue to supervise NMDs once they enter EFC. San Francisco, as discussed below, has hired social workers to supervise this population, but these social workers are housed in probation, rather than in the child welfare department. The very fact that it is probation supervising these youth creates several barriers to youth succeeding in the system – barriers that are often intertwined.

An overarching issue that service providers, youth, and advocates in all Bay Area counties reported is the existence of a fundamental difference in mindset between probation and child welfare departments. Specifically, child welfare workers were described as having a more supportive mindset in contrast to probation officers' law enforcement mindset.<sup>23</sup> Advocates related that this mindset led to probation officers being less willing than social workers to, for example, make repeated attempts to contact a youth who had fallen out of touch.

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<sup>23</sup> Of course, advocates also mentioned specific probation officers making exemplary efforts to help their clients or a perception that line probation officers may be more flexible than supervisory staff. The conclusion to draw is that while not all probation officers are ideally suited to this population, with some training, some officers can become excellent resources for youth in EFC.

As discussed above, probation officers often respond to youth's behavior with sanctions rather than support, with possibly devastating consequences for the youth's stability. All youth interviewed expressed a wish that probation officers would approach issues with a problem solving rather than a punitive mindset. Some probation officers expressed discomfort at supervising youth who are no longer on probation. This discomfort came in the form of a self-perceived lack of knowledge about available resources and how to use those resources effectively, as well as difficulty in transitioning to a method of supervision where the enforcement mechanisms with which they were familiar – probation violations, home supervision, GPS monitoring, and detention – are unavailable. As a result, some advocates report that probation officers use EFC benefits themselves as a method of control – cutting off funds when youth fail to contact them or have difficulty in education or employment instead of working with youth to resolve these issues. One attorney in San Mateo recounted that a probation officer had denied her client the bus passes he needed to get to school because he “hadn't earned them.”

Partly as a result of this, youth often lack a trusting relationship with their probation officer and do not desire to remain in contact with probation, even if they are no longer subject to terms of probation. A strong subset of youth view their probation officers as antagonists: probation officers are not there to help them, but instead to “catch them out.” One youth interviewed stated that she did not believe that her probation officer was there to help her, but instead was just there to check up on her. She stated that she did not believe her probation officer wanted to meet with her and that she felt that her meetings were just “checking boxes.” When she lost her job, she believed that she could no longer continue receiving EFC benefits, and instead of reaching out to her probation officer for help in maintaining eligibility, she simply fell out of contact, as she did not believe that her probation officer would help with the situation. A Napa County ILSP provider stated that in her experience, probation-supervised youth simply do not want the authoritative figure of a probation officer hovering over them – and that this sometimes causes youth to leave EFC.

Further, probation officers across the Bay Area lack knowledge or training on benefits – especially educational benefits – available to youth in EFC. In conversation with one probation officer who works exclusively with foster youth, the probation officer expressed a wish that there were some programs to provide educational support to her clients and was surprised to hear that her clients would qualify for Chafee grants and EOPS programs in local community colleges. One attorney in San Mateo County lamented the fact that while the county child welfare office had a foster youth education liaison, no such position existed in probation. In interviews with eight community college EOPS staff members, only two indicated that they had received referrals from probation officers. Of those two, one stated that they had received one referral, and the other had received referrals from a relative who happened to be a probation officer. An Alameda County ILP staff member stated that often probation officers are unaware of benefits available to foster youth or fail to pass that information on to their clients. Youth also reported receiving no help from probation officers in their education or job searches.

### ***Best Practices:***

- 1. Using social workers to supervise NMDs:** In San Francisco, youth participating in extended foster care are supervised by a social worker housed in the probation department. One such social worker stated that she had the ability to gather more resources for the youth she supervises, and that her presence in her clients' lives is less stigmatizing than a probation officer's would be. For example, while some individuals would be reluctant to admit a probation officer to inspect a potential SILP – a necessary step prior to approval – a social worker may have an easier time gaining access, without necessarily revealing a youth's delinquency history to potential roommates.
- 2. Transitioning youth to a dedicated Probation Officer:** Every probation department in the Bay Area has a unit or officer (depending on the size of the county) dedicated to supervising youth in foster care placement. These probation officers have the opportunity to become familiar with the EFC program and the specific needs of probation-supervised foster youth. Where a probation department does not hire a social worker to supervise youth in EFC, employing a dedicated probation officer (or multiple probation officers, depending on the size of the county caseload) has several advantages. First, transitioning youth to a new case manager once they enter EFC may help both the youth and officer internalize the fact that their relationship is different and may provide a break for youth and officers who have developed an adversarial relationship. Second, especially in counties with low EFC caseloads, having one dedicated officer will enable that officer to spend more time with youth who may need additional “hand-holding” and support to succeed at school or work. Third, this gives the assigned probation officer the opportunity to develop expertise in this area and more effectively provide services to the population.
- 3. Warm hand-offs:** Where youth transitioning into extended foster care also transition to a new case manager, whether a probation officer or a social worker, a “warm hand-off” where all parties work together and the new case manager and his or her client have the opportunity to get to know each other is vital. In San Francisco, social workers work with youth alongside probation officers in the six months prior to the youth's 18th birthday to explain the EFC program to youth and to develop a case plan.
- 4. Create probation policies that clearly delineate role of officers supervising youth in extended foster care:** It should be explicitly stated in written policy that the role of a probation officer supervising youth in extended foster care – especially youth who are no longer subject to probation terms – is not a punitive or primarily a monitoring role. For example, Marin County Probation's extended foster care manual begins with a section on the role of the probation officer, listing the primary roles as providing support, encouraging progress, and finally monitoring compliance. The manual goes on to outline the clear expectation that an officer will provide youth with referrals to necessary supports, create positive relationships with youth, and consider the spirit and purpose of the legislation in making decisions around compliance with program requirements.

Placing these expectations at the forefront demonstrates the primacy of support and flexibility and should inform probation officer's interactions with youth.

***Recommendations:***

1. Provide training on benefits available to foster youth. It is vital that professionals tasked with supporting youth in obtaining their education and employment goals be familiar with supports available to achieve those goals and how to access them. All probation officers working with foster youth, and especially those working with youth in EFC, should receive comprehensive training on all benefits available to foster youth, as well as county-specific programming available.
2. Create probation policies that clearly delineate role of officers supervising youth in extended foster care. It should be explicitly stated in written policy that the role of a probation officer supervising youth in EFC – especially youth who are no longer subject to probation terms – is not punitive, but supporting. Written policies should not only incorporate important information about legal requirements, expected timelines for action, and required forms, but also explain the role of an EFC case manager and his or her responsibility for helping youth achieve their goals. Probation casework practices should be aligned with child welfare EFC practices.
3. Training for probation staff and stakeholders that integrates extended foster care's principles of youth well-being and development, supportive case management, and permanency into probation's culture of ensuring public safety through an individual approach to youth supervision and accountability.

***Connecting Youth with Service Providers***

It is, of course, important for all case managers to work to connect youth with services in the community for which they are eligible. However, connections with service providers are particularly important for probation-supervised youth. A number of service providers, including ILSP and EOPS staff, noted that probation youth coming from group homes have a serious deficit in college readiness and knowledge of educational benefits that are available to them, especially financial aid benefits. Thus, the youth who have the most serious need for help in accessing college are precisely those youth who are least likely to know what help is available.

Because, as described above, probation officers may be unaware of services and supports available to the youth they are supervising, it is especially important that service providers make an affirmative effort to engage with probation supervised youth and to create bridges with probation departments. Despite this, community college EOPS programs generally reported making no special efforts to conduct outreach to probation supervised youth. One EOPS staff member reported that he had never considered the issue of probation supervised youth. Further, in general, EOPS programs rely on youth to self-identify as foster youth. This may create a barrier for probation supervised youth, who may not understand that they are foster youth.

Similarly, although ILP/ILSP providers generally reported having some relationship with probation departments, they stated that their relationships with child welfare workers were stronger. Probation officers also report not having a strong relationship with ILSP and lacking established lines of communication and referral procedures.

Another source of difficulty in establishing relationships between service providers and probation supervised youth in extended foster care is the fact that probation supervised youth are often placed outside of the county of supervision, returning home only when they leave a group home and enter a supervised independent living setting. Probation supervised youth thus lack the opportunity to develop relationships with service providers, including ILSP, while in care as a minor. This makes it less likely that a young person will be aware of or comfortable accessing available services.

***Best Practices:***

1. **Create bridges between Probation Departments and service providers:** In Sonoma County, ILSP staff reported efforts to create stable relationships with probation staff. Probation officers are invited to attend meetings with youth and ILP providers every six months, which helps to integrate probation officers and ILP workers into a youth-serving team.
2. **Service providers reaching out directly to probation-supervised youth:** In Santa Clara County, ILSP providers work directly with group homes used by the probation department to recruit young people, and have a staff member who works with “dually involved” youth. As a result, anywhere from 20-30 probation-supervised youth participate in their programs at any given time. In Alameda County, the ILP receives a list of youth eligible for services on both probation and child welfare side, enabling staff to reach out to all eligible youth. In Napa County, ILP staff members visit youth as soon as it is determined that a youth will enter placement and continue to visit while the youth is placed, permitting youth to develop a relationship with staff and a knowledge of the program that facilitates engagement as a NMD.
3. **Embedding youth advocates in Public Defender offices:** Two county public defender offices – Contra Costa and San Francisco – employ youth advocates to help connect young people to services and to support youth who are struggling. A Contra Costa probation officer commented that the youth advocates were helpful not only as a support to youth, but also as a bridge between probation and the public defender.

***Recommendations:***

1. Provide training to service providers on the existence and needs of probation-supervised foster youth; work with providers to develop outreach materials and programming that respond to the needs of probation-supervised youth.

2. Connect probation and public defenders with legal services organizations that can help youth with areas beyond PD expertise, such as SSI and food stamps.
3. Training for foster youth, defenders, legal aid attorneys, probation agencies, caregivers and other advocates on foster care benefits, kinship approvals, and other public supports available to support transition age foster youth.

### *Planning and Support in Times of Transition: Aging Out*

The period between 18 and 21 is a period of rapid transition in the life of a foster youth, and without a coordinated plan to get housing and services in place, probation foster youth are especially vulnerable to falling through the cracks. Foster youth face important transitions at 18 and 21, and youth, attorneys, and service providers need to make plans for those transitions in advance.

At 18, a probation-supervised foster youth is likely to need to move from a group home into some form of transitional living placement. This can include a change from an institutional congregate environment to living in an apartment with a single roommate. It can include a return from a rural, isolated environment to the city, family and peer group from which the youth was removed. It may require the youth to enroll in a new school. At 21, a probation-supervised youth may need to transition from a THP+FC or SILP into a THP+ program to avoid homelessness. They also may need to have SSI benefits or regional center services set up.

### ***Best Practices:***

1. **Robust transition planning with expected timelines for case manager action:** In Alameda County, child welfare-supervised youth have periodic transitional living conferences every six months upon turning 16. Individuals important to a youth's life are invited to these conferences, where all involved discuss the youth's goals and how all parties can assist in smoothing the youth's path towards these goals. Such conferences should be standard for probation supervised youth as well. These periodic conferences should be accompanied by expected timelines for supports to be provided to youth. For example, when youth are eligible for SSI, case managers should have timelines for completing and submitting an application.
2. **Warm hand-off and connection to THP+ housing:** In San Francisco, youth who need additional housing services through THP+ are given a warm hand-off six months before turning 21. This avoids a last-minute scramble for housing as a youth loses eligibility for EFC and the potential for a period of homelessness if beds are not immediately available. In Marin County, the probation department works with youth to connect them to THP+ housing and other supportive services that provide linkages to colleges.
3. **Reentry policies and procedures:** Some young people may exit the extended foster care system before reaching 21 and then decide to reenter. In such cases, it is important for departments to develop clear reentry procedures that make the process as quick and easy as possible for the youth while ensuring that case managers provide necessary services.

In Contra Costa County, the Probation Department has a written expected timeline for reentry processing that includes a same-day search for emergency housing and explicit deadlines for filing the necessary forms and reports.

### ***Recommendations:***

1. Development of explicit transition planning policies and practices – including transition to community and to adulthood – for all probation supervised youth. In accordance with the juvenile court purposes contained in Welfare and Institutions Code section 202, probation departments are responsible for providing guidance to enable young people to become law-abiding, productive members of society. Supports around transition are critical to this mission for all probation supervised youth. Special attention should be given to developing best practice policy and protocol for populations of youth needing unique services and additional planning such as pregnant and parenting youth, youth who have been commercially sexually exploited, and youth with physical or mental disabilities or challenges.
2. Probation departments, public defenders, and service providers should collaborate to create “no wrong door” reentry procedures, ensuring that young people who seek to reenter extended foster care can be appropriately directed and necessary forms can be timely filed regardless of whom the young person first approaches.

### **Conclusion**

The data and the available information indicates that we need to revamp our approach to serving probation supervised youth in extended foster care. Although, legally, probation supervised foster youth have the same access to extended foster care as child welfare youth, it is clear that probation youth are far more likely to exit the system prior to reaching 21 without achieving the desired education, employment, housing and permanency outcomes of AB 12. Moreover, the quantitative data does not tell the whole story. Some youth – for example, youth in San Francisco and Sonoma Counties – who are statutorily eligible for EFC benefits are not receiving them due to locally imposed policies adding eligibility requirements. Others, even though they may be participating in EFC, are not receiving the full benefit of such participation because they are not being provided needed placements, robust case management services, and connections to other benefits and services for which they are eligible because of their foster care status. For too many probation-supervised youth, case managers condition the provision of a placement and services on the youth already succeeding in obtaining a job or enrolling in college. What should be a safety net provided as a default is treated as a reward that a youth must earn. EFC is not providing youth the basic core supports it was intended to offer: a safety net that connects the most disconnected and vulnerable youth with resources to help them achieve stability and meet their educational, employment and permanency goals. Instead, it presents a series of hurdles that a young person must clear in order, requiring the young person to prove achievement of the desired emancipation outcomes in order to obtain or maintain a minimum level of safe and stable housing. Ironically, the youth who are least capable of jumping these hurdles are the very youth EFC was designed to protect and support.

Homelessness should not be the consequence of being unable to navigate the obstacle course erected for probation supervised foster youth. For young people participating in EFC, the system must provide a safe and secure placement and access to all the supports and services that a young person needs in order to achieve stability and attain their permanency, educational, and employment goals. The data highlighted in this report provides a starting roadmap for the culture, practice, and policy changes necessary to ensure probation supervised youth can fully access the benefits of extension of foster care to 21 to allow them to become healthy and productive adults.