

Overview of Los Angeles County Probation AB 12/212 Activities

Background

AB 12 and AB 212, known collectively as The California Fostering Connections to Success Act, were passed during September of 2010 and 2011 respectively and went into effect January 1, 2012. Starting January 2011, The Los Angeles County Probation Department (Probation) has been involved at the State and local levels to help shape AB 12 and AB 212, the latter of which dealt in large part with defining Extended Foster Care (EFC) for youth under WIC 602 - Delinquency Jurisdiction and a new juvenile jurisdiction and status; WIC 450 – Transition Jurisdiction. Probation also contributed to the development of the All County Letters that outlined AB 12/212 policy statewide and the development of policy and protocol on the local level by collaborating with DCFS and community based stakeholders.

Extended Foster Care Populations under Probation Supervision

Two populations of youth in EFC come under the supervision of Probation: 1) youth under WIC 602 Jurisdiction who are on a placement order (Suitable Placement) on their 18th birthday; and 2) youth 17 years and six months old and up to 20 year old in 2013, on a placement order who have completed their rehabilitative goals elect to remain in foster care under WIC 450 -Transition Jurisdiction. Youth who are at least 18 years old are called *Nonminor Dependents* while those youth between 17 years and six months and just under 18 year old are called *Transition Dependents*. Finally, to receive EFC benefits, nonminor dependents must be in process of performing one of five eligibility criteria:

1. Be enrolled in high school or equivalent program;
2. Be enrolled in college/vocational school;
3. Work at least 80 hours/month
4. Participate in a program/activity that helps the youth find or removes barriers to employment;
5. Be able to do one of the above because of a medical or mental health condition.

Transitioning Probation Youth to the Dependency System

In addition to broadening and enhancing foster care benefits for youth 18 years old and older, AB 12/212 has strengthened the judicial process by which certain probation youth are identified to transition to the supervision of DCFS. In Los Angeles County, Probation, DCFS and the Juvenile Court have been working to incorporate these mandates into its "Reverse 241.1" protocol to ensure that all probation youth 17 years and five months and younger who have completed their terms of probation and are risk of abuse or neglect, do not unnecessarily remain on probation.

Probation's Extended Foster Care Program: Transition Jurisdiction Services

AB 12/212 provided individual counties with the option if they wanted the WIC 450 Transition Jurisdiction youth supervised by local child welfare or probation departments. Los Angeles County decided that youth under this new juvenile jurisdiction would best be served supervised by Probation. To that end, Probation developed a new program, Transition Jurisdiction Services (TJS), to provide support and guidance to youth in EFC under WIC 450 Jurisdiction. Currently, TJS is staffed by two Deputy Probation Officers (DPOs) and one Director. However, Probation's intention is that the program will add a Supervisor and more DPOs as caseloads of WIC 450 – Transition Jurisdiction youth grow. Youth with placement orders who are 18 years old and under WIC 602 Jurisdiction will continue to be supervised by DPOs from Probation's Residential Based Services (RBS) Program.

Extended Foster Care Placements

In addition to creating the new juvenile jurisdiction category, WIC 450, for youth previously on probation who wish to remain in foster care, AB 12/212 also created two new placement settings for youth in EFC; Transitional Housing Program Plus Foster Care (THP Plus FC) and the Supervised Independent Living Placement (SILP). THP Plus FC is still in the development process, but the SILP, which can be any number of residential settings from a room for rent to a dorm depending on the youth's readiness to live in such a setting and safety of the location, is utilized by Probation to a great degree.

Caseload Statistics

Probation Extended Foster Care (EFC) Caseload statistics as of July 1, 2012:

- # of EFC cases under WIC 602 Jurisdiction: **255**
- # of EFC cases under WIC 450 Jurisdiction: **38**
- # of WIC 450 – Transition Jurisdiction cases in SILPs: **32**

Issues and Challenges

- Caseloads under WIC 450 – Transition Jurisdiction have grown steadily since January 1, 2012. Given the likelihood that WIC 450 cases will remain in care for three years (until the 21st birthday) and caseload benchmarks are not to exceed 31, there is still a need for clarity on funding for staff to keep up with the increase in cases.
- AB 12/212 mandates that all youth who turn 18 years old while on a placement order are eligible for EFC benefits. However, the current federal interpretation of eligibility for probation youth requires that the youth must physically reside in an appropriate Title IV-E setting on the youth's 18th birthday in order to draw down federal funding. The result is that youth on placement orders who are on AWOL or detention status at the time of their 18th birthday will need to be paid for using local resources which could create a financial burden for the County.

