



TEXAS
Department of Family
and Protective Services

SB1896 Mentor Initiative Report

December 31, 2022

Kezeli Wold, Interim Commissioner

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Executive Summary

Pursuant to Senate Bill 1896 (SB 1896), 87th Legislative Regular Session, 2021, the Legislature directed the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), in conjunction with each single source continuum contractor in the state and faith based and community based organizations, to examine the feasibility of designing a volunteer mentor program for children in congregate care settings. The statute is as follows:

[Texas Family Code §264.117. MENTORS FOR FOSTER CHILDREN.](#)

(a) The department and each single source continuum contractor in this state, in collaboration with local governmental entities and faith-and community-based organizations, shall examine the feasibility of designing a volunteer mentor program for children in congregate care settings. (b) Not later than December 31, 2022, the department shall report its findings and recommendations for establishing a mentor program to the legislature. (c) This section expires September 1, 2023.

The following legislatively required Mentor Initiative Report details the Department's findings and recommendations pertaining to the feasibility of a mentor program for youth in congregate care settings.

Background Information/History

DFPS recognizes that positive relationships with caring and supportive adults can be important to improving outcomes for youth and young adults in or exiting the foster care system. Over the years, DFPS participated in both formal and informal partnerships to directly provide or contract on a limited basis to provide mentoring services to youth in DFPS conservatorship. For example, [DFPS Transitional Living Services](#) provide a variety of supportive services to youth in the foster care system. These services include programs such as Preparation for Adult Living (PAL), Education and Training Voucher (ETV), Extended Foster Care and Supervised Independent Living (SIL) in addition to other services, resources and supports to assist youth and young adults currently or formerly in foster care with their transition to a successful adulthood and was an initial step in providing mentoring services to youth.

2010 Study and Outcomes

[House Bill 3008](#) (HB3008) passed during the 80th Regular Legislative Session, directed the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) to establish a pilot mentoring program. Through the pilot, DFPS contracted with a private or nonprofit entity to pair youth in foster care in Tarrant County, Denton County, Dallas County, and Collin County with volunteer adult mentors in order to foster relationships of support and guidance in preparation for the youth's transition to a successful adulthood. In addition, DFPS was required to contract with a public institution of higher learning to conduct an evaluation of the effectiveness of the program and report the findings to the legislature January 1, 2011.

DFPS accordingly contracted with Big Brothers and Big Sisters of North Texas to provide mentoring services through the pilot program. Of the 240 youth referred by DFPS, 45 participated in the pilot. This could be due to the barriers the contractor reported to enrolling youth in programming, including but not limited to, foster parents not responding to or deciding not to let youth participate and youth aging out of foster care before being matched. Of the 45 youth that were matched, the contractor reported that 19 (42 percent) did not end in a match. The two most common reasons were the youths' decision to not participate (11 percent) and the youth moving (8 percent). Three youth (6 percent) participated in the mentoring program for a year, one of which participated for 13 months. No youth stayed in the pilot over 13 months. 20 of the youth (44 percent) participated six months or less.

Additionally, DFPS contracted with the University of Texas Arlington to evaluate the effectiveness of the pilot. Youth participating in the mentoring pilot were asked to complete a confidential survey. The contractor reported though there were problems with implementation of the youth in foster care mentoring pilot, responses from 9 out of 10 youth who took the foster care survey suggest that those who did participate had positive experiences. 90% of the youth surveyed reported that he or she enjoyed spending time with a mentor and felt their mentor helped them gain self-confidence, experience improvement in school, and experience improved relationships with their foster parents.

Based on the responses on the survey from youth and the existing literature on the benefits of mentoring, the report identifies that continued implementation of the mentorship program could be beneficial should the Department implement the recommendations included in the report:

- include evaluators in the initial planning stages of the program and engage all necessary stakeholders on the front end of the project,
- consider unique needs of youth in foster care and match services accordingly,
- recruit mentors of various race and ethnicity, encourage development relationships between the mentor and other supportive people in the youth's life,
- provide on-going training to DFPS staff and foster parents to better understand benefits of mentoring and criteria for the program,
- use success stories for buy in of the program, ensure mentors receive on-going training and supervision so they have knowledge and skills to engage and understand the unique needs of youth in foster care,
- reduce the number of placements,
- encourage visits even if youth is in a facility such as juvenile detention or hospital,
- monitor intensity and quality of mentor and youth contact, and
- continue ongoing evaluation of the program.

The full report can be found at this link: [2010 Mentor Pilot Evaluation](#)

Current Mentorship Efforts at DFPS

In April 2018, the Office of Volunteer and Community Engagement (now the Faith Based and Community Engagement Division) began exploring ways to expand mentoring opportunities for children in foster care and former foster youth. Through speaking with leadership at various mentoring organizations around the state, DFPS staff learned and determined that to run an effective mentor program within the Department, a new team of staff would need to be formed. Because DFPS did not have the full-time staff needed to create and sustain an agency-run mentor program, the agency decided to instead connect interested individuals to mentor organizations who mentor exclusively current and former foster youth in Texas.

In response to these findings, on January 9, 2019, DFPS launched a mentoring initiative by developing a [mentoring webpage](#) containing:

- social media stories and photos of successful mentoring relationships throughout January National Mentoring Month,
- a recruitment push for mentors through Volunteermatch.org starting in January 2019 which received over 800 volunteer inquiries on becoming a mentor; and
- a directory of mentoring organizations statewide that work specifically with foster youth or foster youth who have transitioned out of care.

The following programs and services are also available to foster youth and match needs that youth have expressed wanting in a mentorship program:

PAL Services

The Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) program was established in 1986 in an effort to help support youth in foster care to assist with their transition to adulthood. The PAL program was created to help older youth in substitute care prepare for their departure from the DFPS' care. PAL services include involvement in programs aimed at improving youths' self-esteem and improving their ability to make responsible decisions. PAL helps to support youth to face the challenges of adulthood and their own independence.

PAL, in collaboration with public and private organizations, assist youth in identifying and developing support systems, services and housing for when they leave foster care. The PAL program gives training for independent living skills and education regarding transitional living services and resources. Resources offered range from financial assistance and planning to housing assistance to education assistance. Youth eligible for these resources are youth and young adults aged 14-21 who are either currently in foster care, extended foster care, or who aged out of foster care in Texas. The PAL program helps older youth in foster care prepare for their departure and transition to a successful adulthood. Supportive services and benefits are provided by PAL Staff or PAL Contract Providers to eligible young adults up to age 21 to become self-sufficient and productive adults. PAL is funded by the federal Chafee Foster Care Independence Program and State general revenue funds.

https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_x10200.asp

Services include:

- **Life skills assessment** (Casey Life Skills Assessment) to assess strengths and needs in life skills attainment: <https://www.casey.org/casey-life-skills/> (assessments are conducted before Life skills training).
- **Life skills training** (age 16 to 18) in the following core areas:
 - Health and Safety;
 - Housing and Transportation;
 - Job Readiness;
 - Financial Management;
 - Life Decisions/Responsibility;

- Personal/Social Relationships
- Educational/Vocational services

Training is offered via one or more method(s) to include: 1) classroom; 2) independent study guide (web based); 3) independent study guide (paper); or 4) through the school as documented in the Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARD) or Individualized Education Program (IEP) progress notes.

Supportive Financial Services

The Department provides support financial services to youth based on need and funding availability) for educational, vocational, and auxiliary needs including:

- A **Transitional Living Allowance** of up to \$1,000 is distributed in increments of up to \$500 per month to young adults (up to age 21) who participated in PAL training to help with initial start-up costs in adult living. The maximum cap was increased to \$1,500 through FY22 due to the Pandemic.
- **Transition Support Services/Aftercare** to help young adults who have aged out of care with self-sufficiency planning and resource coordination. Young adults who have left care also have access to some educational, vocational, and auxiliary funding through this program.
- **Aftercare Room and Board Assistance** to young adults engaged in their Transition Support Services program, of up to \$500 per month for rent, utilities, utility deposits, food, etc. for young adults ages 18-21. Eligibility for this assistance is based on need and may not exceed \$3,000 of accumulated payments per young adult. The maximum cap was increased to \$4,000 through FY22 due to the Pandemic.
- The PAL program includes several **Developmental camps and conferences**, both statewide and regionally including the annual Statewide College Conference, Statewide Teen Conference, Statewide Community College Conference, and PEAKS Camp in addition to various other Teen Conferences and Aging Out Seminars.

Statewide Youth Leadership Council

The **Youth Leadership Council (YLC)** is comprised of two elected or appointed youth or young adults (ages 16 to 21) per region. The purpose of the statewide YLC is to provide a forum for youth who are currently or were formerly in foster care to develop self-advocacy skills, to address identified issues and concerns about experiences in the DFPS foster care system and to make recommendations about improving services to children and youth in foster care. Upon request by CPS, the YLC reviews state policies

and programs and provides feedback. Regional Youth Leadership Councils made of a broader audience also meet around the same goals and purposes.

Extended Foster Care Program

With the implementation of the federal Fostering Connections Act (*Title IV-E of the Social Security Act*), a young adult who ages out of foster care at age 18 is eligible for **Extended Foster Care** provided there is an available placement, the young adult signs a voluntary extended foster care agreement and meets at least one of the following conditions:

18 up to 22-year-olds, and:

- regularly attending high school or enrolled in a program leading toward a high school diploma or school equivalence certificate (GED); or is 18 up to 21 years old or;
- regularly attending an institution of higher education or a post-secondary vocational or technical program (minimum six hours per semester); or
- actively participating in a program or activity that promotes, or removes barriers to, employment;
- employed for at least 80 hours per month; or
- incapable of doing any of the above due to a documented medical condition.

For more information about Extended Foster Care Go to:

https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_x10400.asp.

Supervised Independent Living (SIL) Program

The **SIL program** is a component of the Extended Foster Care program and allows young adults to live independently under a minimally supervised living arrangement provided by a DFPS contracted provider. A young adult in SIL is not supervised 24-hours a day and is allowed increased responsibilities, such as managing their own finances, buying groceries/personal items, and working with a landlord. Living arrangements may include apartments, non-college and college dorm settings, shared housing, and host home settings. Individuals are assisted in transitioning to independent living, achieving identified education and employment goals, accessing community resources, engaging in needed life skills trainings, and establishing important relationships. Young adults must apply for and be accepted into the SIL program. For more information about SIL go to:

https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Protection/Youth_and_Young_Adults/Transitional_Living/Extended_Foster_Care/supervised_independent_living.asp.

Return for the Extended Foster Care Program

Young adults who aged out of DFPS conservatorship may **return** at any time up until the age of 21 to participate in the **Extended Foster Care Program** if the required stipulations are met: PAL staff pre-screen young adults who want to return for Extended Foster Care and refer to the regional re-entry staff to help young adults gain access to these services.

Foster Youth to Independence Initiative

The Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) Initiative offers housing vouchers to local public housing authorities for young people aging out of foster care who are at risk of experiencing homelessness. Public housing authorities without a current Family Unification Program (FUP) voucher allocation can request Tenant Protection Vouchers (TPV) to serve youth under the age of 25 with a history of child welfare involvement.

Educational Support

- **The Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Program** is a federally funded program administered by DFPS. Based on the cost of attendance as established by higher education, youth and young adults ages 16 up to the age of 23 may be eligible to receive up to \$5,000 in financial assistance per year to help them reach their postsecondary education goals providing they are eligible for ETV and meet the criteria.
- The **college tuition and fee waivers** provide exemptions from payment of tuition and fees at a Texas state supported college or university to eligible individuals formerly in Texas state foster care and adopted youth.

DFPS College Scholarships

- The **Freshmen Success Fund for Foster Youth** (est. April 2013) is a grant for first time college freshmen formerly in DFPS foster care. Each year there will be 4 one-time grants of \$1,000 available for young adults enrolling in their freshmen year. These grants are to cover basic non-tuition related expenses such as books and supplies, computers and software, tools and uniforms and transportation. Students must be enrolled in a Texas state-supported college, university, or vocational/technical school that accepts the state college tuition and fee waiver.
- The **C. Ed Davis-PAL Scholarship** (est. July 2012) is for basic non-tuition needs for former foster youth who are majoring in government, political science, history, or other pre-law field. Scholarships are for \$1,000 per academic year and are available to sophomore, junior or senior year students. More information about these scholarships is available at

https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Protection/Youth_and_Young_Adults/Education/other_resources.asp#scholarships.

Employment Support

- DFPS State Office and Texas Workforce Commission, and DFPS regional offices, 28 local Workforce Development Boards and local Transition Centers have jointly developed and entered into **agreements addressing the unique challenges facing youth and young adults currently or formerly in foster care transitioning to a successful adulthood**, including improving employment outcomes for *these youth and young adults*. The purpose of these agreements relates to:
 - Furthering the objectives of the DFPS Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) program;
 - Ensuring job readiness, career exploration, employment, training, and other related services such as internships, apprenticeships and vocational rehabilitation are prioritized and targeted to meet the needs of youth currently or formerly in foster care; and
 - Making referrals, where feasible, for short term housing for foster youth who need housing.
 - DFPS staff, Workforce Advocates at Transition Centers, caregivers, and PAL contractors refer youth ages 16 and older to local *Texas Workforce Solutions* office's for job search and readiness assistance, career exploration, and employment and training services. Each Board has designated a point of contact for staff and youth to access for assistance and services. All youth and young adults are encouraged to register in the state job search system via <https://www.workintexas.com/vosnet/Default.aspx>.
- **Texas Workforce Commission Vocational Rehabilitation Services** are designed to remove a barrier to obtain or maintain employment for a student with a disability age 14-22. In most cases, the services provided to transition students fall into one of these 5 Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) categories:
 - **Career Exploration counseling**, making informed choices about various job opportunities
 - **Work-Based Learning experiences**, which include in-school and after school-work opportunities
 - **Job Readiness training**, to develop social skills and independent living

- **Counseling on postsecondary training**, or other comprehensive transition opportunities
- **Instruction in Self-Advocacy**, ability to effectively communicate, convey, negotiate, or assert his/her own interests and/or desires

High School Vocational Rehabilitation Liaison Counselors, Workforce Advocates at Transition Centers, or PAL staff can help get youth and young adults connected to these services. For more information go to:

<https://www.twc.texas.gov/jobseekers/vocational-rehabilitation-services>.

SB 1896 Implementation

In response to SB1896, a workgroup consisting of internal and external stakeholders met to examine the feasibility of designing a volunteer mentor program for children in congregate care settings. The workgroup included the following DFPS staff, community mentor program providers, representatives from single source continuum contractors, and faith-based representation.

Name	Organization
Linda Garcia	2Ingage
Andrew Holland	2Ingage
Paul Busby	DFPS
Jim Currier	DFPS
Tiffany Denham	DFPS
Rachel Duer	DFPS
Gail Gonzalez	DFPS
Sharee Hamlin	DFPS
Kathryn Houlton	DFPS
Ellen Letts	DFPS
Christy Ashworth-Mazzerolle	DFPS
Hollie Mims	DFPS
Hector Ortiz	DFPS
Judy Pavone	DFPS
Fidel Rassu	DFPS
Yesenia Rodriguez	DFPS
Todd Serpico	DFPS
Theresa Thomas	DFPS
Tiffani Tillman	DFPS
Gaye Vopat	DFPS

Denise Kendrick	Embrace Texas
Amber Knowles	Fostering Family
Chelsea Pound	OCOK
Courtney Leaverton	OCOK
Kristi Naylor	OCOK
Erin Argue	Partnerships for Children
Guy Hanson	SJRC Texas
Lauren Sides	SJRC Texas
Jack Noles	St. Francis Ministries
Audra Simpson	The Champion Project
Chris Lopez	Thru Project
Elaine Hartle	Thru Project

The workgroup, after reviewing relevant literature and data pertaining to exploring a mentorship program for current and former foster youth, met to discuss critical factors for mentoring programs for youth in congregate care settings. This included information related to current community mentor programs, congregate care in Texas, and youth feedback.

Current Community Mentor Programs

In Texas, 50 counties have at least one mentor program that works exclusively with current and former foster youth, and 204 counties are without a program, as shown below.

Region	Number of Programs per County
1	5 out of 41 counties have programs
2	3 out of 30 counties have programs
3E	9 out of 9 counties have programs
3W	10 out of 10 counties have programs
4	1 out of 23 counties have programs
5	1 out of 15 counties have programs
6A	1 out of 1 county has a program
6B	9 out of 12 counties have programs
7	10 out of 30 counties have programs
8	3 out of 28 counties have programs
9	0 out of 30 counties have programs
10	1 out of 6 counties have programs
11	0 out of 19 counties have programs

Based on this data, the workgroup identified the following gaps or needs for mentor program expansion:

- Region 1 has five programs that serve a 41-county rural area of the state which may not be sufficient programming depending on the number of youth that need to be served
- Regions 2 and 8 have three mentoring programs that serve 30 and 28 counties respectively, which may not be sufficient programming for the amount of counties these programs cover
- Regions 3E, 3W, 6B, and 7 appear to have sufficient programming
- Regions 4, 5, and 6A have one mentoring program per region; however, 6A (Harris County) is the most populated metropolitan area of Texas and contains most of the congregate care settings. For region 6A, one mentoring program may not be sufficient to serve the youth eligible for these services
- Regions 9 and 11 have no mentoring programs and could benefit from having a program

DFPS does not currently have a consistent tracking mechanism for youth who are receiving mentoring services, as the agency's efforts have been more organic in nature. Additionally, DFPS is not universally documenting when youth voluntarily participate in a mentoring program, what type of program, and if the mentoring continues throughout their placement. There are several different data reports that capture youth data, but each is specific to certain parameters based on age, stage of service, or youth who are no longer in care. The ability of DFPS to effectively track youth in a mentoring program within current DFPS data systems will have to be further studied and training on how to record and track data on mentoring services will have to be developed and distributed to staff statewide.

Congregate Care Discussion

DFPS considered certain demographic information to understand the feasibility and scope of need for a youth mentoring program. As specified by the SB 1896 legislation, the department and workgroup focused on the population of youth living in congregate care settings. Congregate care settings in Texas are general residential operations (GRO). A GRO is defined as: A childcare facility that provides care for more than seven children for 24 hours a day, including facilities known as children's homes, halfway houses, residential treatment centers, emergency shelters, and therapeutic camps. See Texas [Human Resources Code §42.002\(4\)](#).¹

¹ Child Care Investigations Handbook, http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CCI/Files/LPPH_px_Definitions_of_Terms.asp

They are located in the following regions of Texas:

Region	Number of GROs
1	12
2	5
3	34
4	9
5	7
6	86
7	34
8	29
9	2
10	2
11	11
Total	231

As of January 11, 2022, there were 231 contracted general residential operations (GRO) providers across the state². This does not include out-of-state placements or child-specific contracts but may include some placements that are essentially the same operation but have separate facility numbers.

The vast majority are concentrated in urban areas of Texas, with one region – Region 6, the Houston area metroplex – having 36.9% of the available GRO placements.

Of the 231 GRO placements, 109 of them (47.2%) accept both males and females. Of the other 122 GRO placements that accept only a specific gender, 42 accept only females and 68 accept only males. No data is available for the remaining 12 GRO placements. See table below for a breakdown of gender accepted by region².

² DFPS Data Warehouse report pcs_15: Number of Active Placements by GRO Operations with DFPS and SSCC (CBC Only) Contracts

Region	Both Genders	Female only	Male only
Region 1	10	0	1
Region 2	4	0	1
Region 3	15	3	12
Region 4	3	4	2
Region 5	2	3	2
Region 6	23	19	42
Region 7	18	7	6
Region 8	24	3	0
Region 9	2	0	0
Region 10	2	0	0
Region 11	6	3	2
Total	109	42	68

There were 2,282 children in these placements as of January 11, 2022³ and the average stay of children in GRO settings is 128 days (just over 4 months). See table below for average days in placement per GRO type.⁴

³ DFPS Data Warehouse report pcs_15: Number of Active Placements by GRO Operations with DFPS and SSCC (CBC Only) Contracts

⁴ Open Foster Care Contracted Placements FY20 Q5 YTD – Log 100125

Contract Type	Average Days in Placement
GRO-BCC (basic childcare)	276
GRO-ES (emergency services)	53
GRO-RTC (residential treatment center)	218
GRO-RTC/IPTP residential treatment center – intensive psychiatric transition program)	60
GRO-TED (treatment of emotional disorders)	218
TEP (temporary emergency placement)	21

**Note: The data does not indicate whether a youth moves into a lesser or more restrictive setting after this length of stay.*

The average age of a child in a congregate care setting is 12.2 years old. See table below for average age per GRO type.⁵

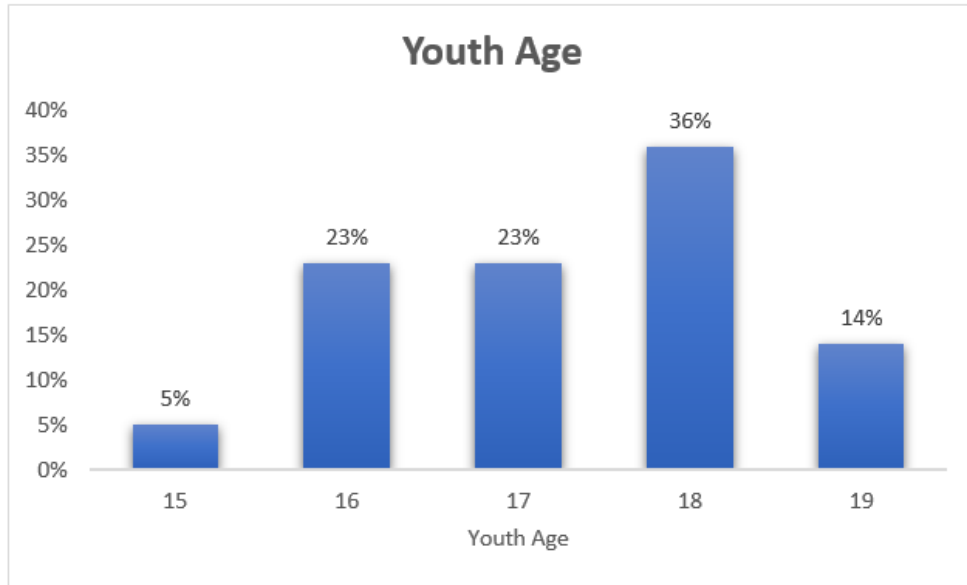
Contract Type	Average Age
GRO-BCC	12.4
GRO-ES	10.4
GRO-RTC	13.7
GRO-RTC/IPTP	14.4
GRO-TED	12.9
TEP	15.2

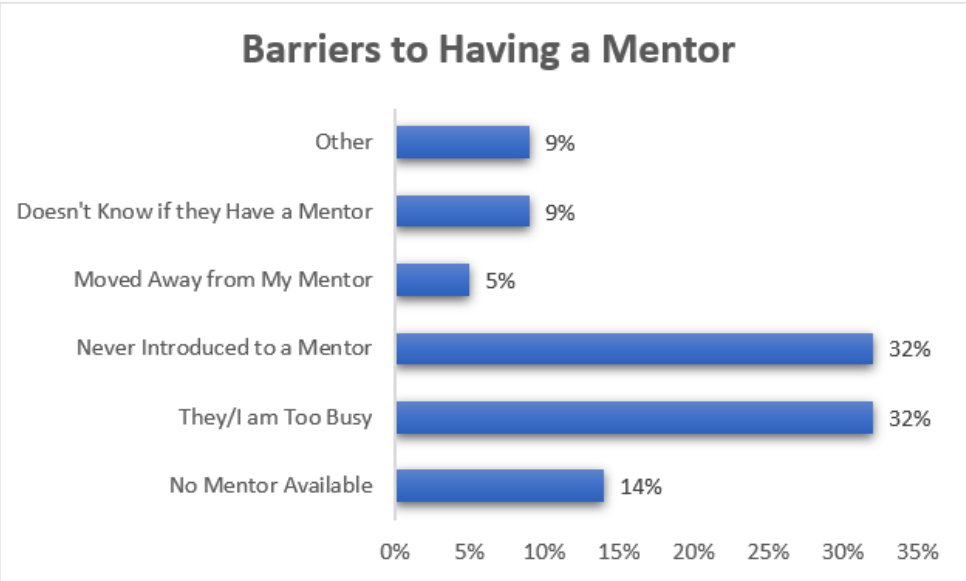
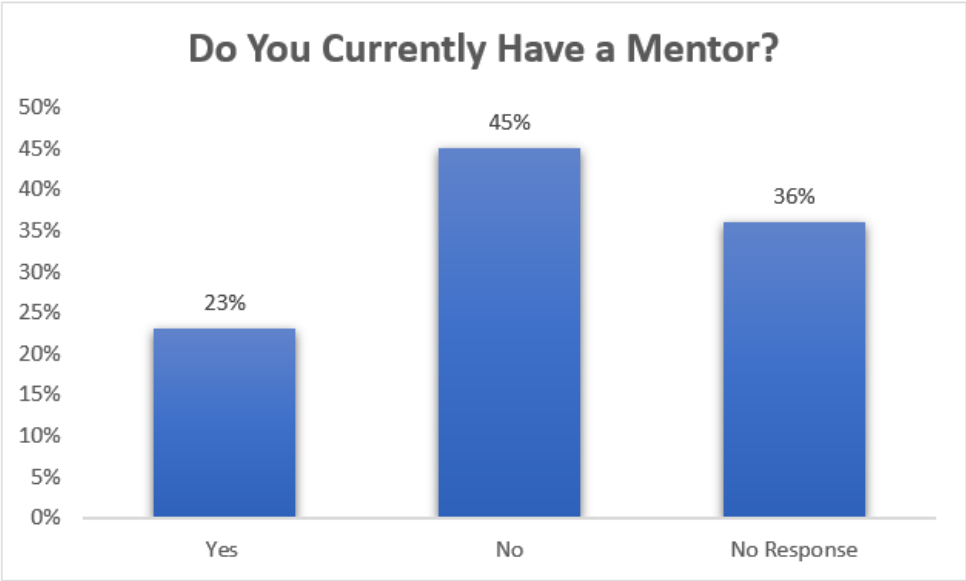
Over the previous fiscal year, the workgroup reviewed and considered the above preliminary data. This data yielded questions regarding more in-depth data needs. Of utmost importance was the lack of data the agency possesses regarding existing mentoring programs across Texas; specifically, how and when youth were being referred to mentors, as well as the effectiveness of current mentorship programs. If DFPS were to move forward with implementing statewide mentoring programming, more than the community mentor programs already available, then additional data points will need to be sought and considered to make the best-informed decision about the feasibility of formal mentoring programming for the entire state.

⁵ Open Foster Care Contracted Placements FY21 Q5 YTD – Log 103961

Youth Feedback

To fully understand “feasibility” of mentoring programming, it is important to consider the mentees’ or recipients’ input. A questionnaire was distributed to twenty-two at the Youth Leadership Conference in March 2022 asking youth to provide feedback on mentorship. Full survey results are located in the Appendix. The workgroup’s key findings are summarized in the below charts:





According to this youth survey, it appears that slightly more youth did not want a mentor than did. In addition, most youth noted also they did not have a mentor. While the youth survey was informative, it included limited youth participation. Again, if DFPS were to implement statewide mentor programming it would be prudent to gather additional youth input to be more representative of this target population in order to form a more solid basis for building mentor programming. Gathering additional youth input would allow DFPS to discern youth's true interests in having a mentor program and what they consider most beneficial or even whether to create a state-level mentor program at all.

Closing and Recommendations

DFPS recognizes the importance of mentoring services for youth in the foster care system. Youth in foster and congregate care typically interact with several workers: a DFPS caseworker, a caseworker at the congregate care facility, and potentially a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA). Youth in congregate care facilities are eligible for community mentor programs and may be matched with mentors while in those facilities. As indicated in the youth survey, sometimes foster youth can be overwhelmed by the number of adults involved in their case as they navigate the system.

In looking at the feasibility of a state-level youth mentor program, two significant gaps were identified as needing more in-depth data:

- 1) Developing a full understanding of the landscape of existing community youth mentor programs across the state and;
- 2) Conducting a more robust surveying of youth in foster care across the state to gain a more representative reflection of their input and insights.

While examining the feasibility of youth mentor programs, DFPS learned from workgroup external stakeholders that there are many community mentor programs in existence in Texas. While DFPS knows of several mentor programs, the department does not currently have a database of all the existing programs. It seems logical that the agency should consider whether existing programs can serve the needs of youth in foster care across the state.

Additionally, one of the most important factors to consider, if not the most important, is what youth say that they want. While the legislatively directed pilot that occurred in 2010, where youth were surveyed and the recent survey conducted for the purpose of SB1896 included youth input, in both cases there was limited youth participation. In 2010, the pilot included only four counties in Texas (Tarrant, Denton, Dallas, and Collin Counties) and 45 youth; the recent survey included 22 youth from across the state but is still a fraction of youth in foster care. We recommend additional surveys to establish a more representative reflection of what youth think is warranted for mentoring programs.

The workgroup identified a prevalent issue for both youth and mentors is staying in contact as youth move from placement to placement. Youth may move several hours away, or at times out of state. For DFPS to execute a mentoring program internally,

additional full-time employees would have to be hired to oversee the management of regional mentor programs across the state and their mentors for youth. As indicated in the placement data contained within this report, an extensive travel budget would be required for either full-time DFPS staff or volunteer mentors to travel when youth move to other placements. Housing a mentoring program within DFPS has a large cost that would include salaries, benefits, travel costs, training costs and other state agency staffing requirements.

Additionally, further discussion and decisions will need to be determined regarding the type of mentoring program DFPS would potentially implement. There are several types of youth mentoring programs: traditional one-to-one (one adult to one youth), team (several adults working with small groups of youth), group (one adult to four youth), peer (youth to youth), and virtual mentoring (email, video or social media). Each type has successes and challenges for a variety of reasons. Ideally, any mentor program established within DFPS would be evidence-based and trauma-informed.

The Faith Based and Community Engagement Division hired a full-time employee to fulfill the requirements of Rider 39. This staff member, in addition to acting as a volunteer service liaison and single point of contact for public and community partners providing mentoring services, will assist the workgroup to gather and analyze the additional data needed to determine both the feasibility and need to implement a mentorship program within the Department.

The optimum solution is for DFPS to further explore maximizing the use of existing community mentor programs by continuing partnerships and building new partnerships with community organizations already providing mentoring services to youth in care. In addition, the workgroup needs to gather more input from youth on this topic. Through this approach, DFPS can better understand if there is any unmet need for youth mentoring in congregate care settings.

Appendix: Youth Survey Results

- Age:
 - 15 (1)
 - 16 (5)
 - 17 (5)
 - 18 (8)
 - 19 (3)
- How old were you when you came into care?
 - 2 (1)
 - 3 (2)
 - 4 and 6 (1)
 - 6 (2)
 - 10 (2)
 - 12 (1)
 - 14 (5)
 - 13 and 16 (1)
 - 16 (5)
 - 17 (1)
 - No response (1)
- Number of placements you've been in since entering foster care:
 - 0-5 (14)
 - 6-10 (3)
 - Over 10 (2)
 - No response (2)
- Do you want to have a mentor? Why or why not?
 - **No**, but thank you
 - Yes, because they could help me with a lot of stuff
 - Yes, having any kind of support system is always a good idea
 - **No**, I already have one.
 - **No**, I was never given one.
 - Doesn't matter to me.
 - **No**, because I have my foster mom there for me and we talk about everything.
 - At this time, it would be **No**.

- No, I don't need one
- Yes, I need one on one assistance.
- Yes, so they can help me get to where I am going to and their advice.
- No, because I never got offered to have one.
- No, because I believe in self learning (sometimes).
- Yes, to help me with stuff that is personal.
- Yes, because they help me with anything I need.
- Yes, it'll be nice and help a lot.
- Yes, having someone by my side done things especially going through adult life is hard.
- Yes, I think that having a mentor would be helpful to me. Sometimes I just need to vent.
- Yes, it would be nice to have input on someone that has good intentions for me.
- No, I already have one and really connect with her.
- No, I feel that I'm not in a state to listen.
- No, I already have a mentor
- **Do you currently have a mentor (an adult that advises, supports and role models for youth that is not your case worker, CASA, or family member)?**
 - Yes (5)
 - No (10)
 - No response (8)
- **If yes, how did you meet this person?**
 - Introduced through the school for example a teacher, coach, or other adult from school (3)
 - Introduced by caseworker/judge/therapist (1)
 - Other family (1), attorney (1), WAY Alliance (1)
 - CASA (1)
 - Not applicable (14)
- **What type of mentor do you prefer?**
 - Paid mentor (1)
 - Assigned mentor (5)
 - Non-paid volunteer (9)
 - Self-selected mentor (you select your own) (8)
 - Group mentoring (1)

- Not applicable (2)
- **Would you feel comfortable if your mentor knows information about your CPS case?**
 - Yes: (16) Comment: It helps them understand me more.
 - No: (3)
 - Yes and No because I don't really want them to know everything. (1)
 - No response: (2)
- **What would you hope that a mentor relationship would include?**
 - College Prep (15)
 - Life Skills (budget, how to cook, how to apply for jobs, etc.) (17)
 - Fun activities together (16)
 - Tutoring (11)
 - Someone to talk to (16)
 - Did not answer (2)
- **What have been barriers to having a mentor?**
 - No mentor available (3)
 - They are too busy/I'm too busy (7)
 - I have never been introduced to a mentor (7)
 - I moved away from my mentor (1)
 - I don't know if I have a mentor (2)
 - Other:
 - I don't know
 - My age – I am 18
 - I have a CASA
 - There haven't been any barriers other than availability
 - Not applicable
 - Did not answer (4)