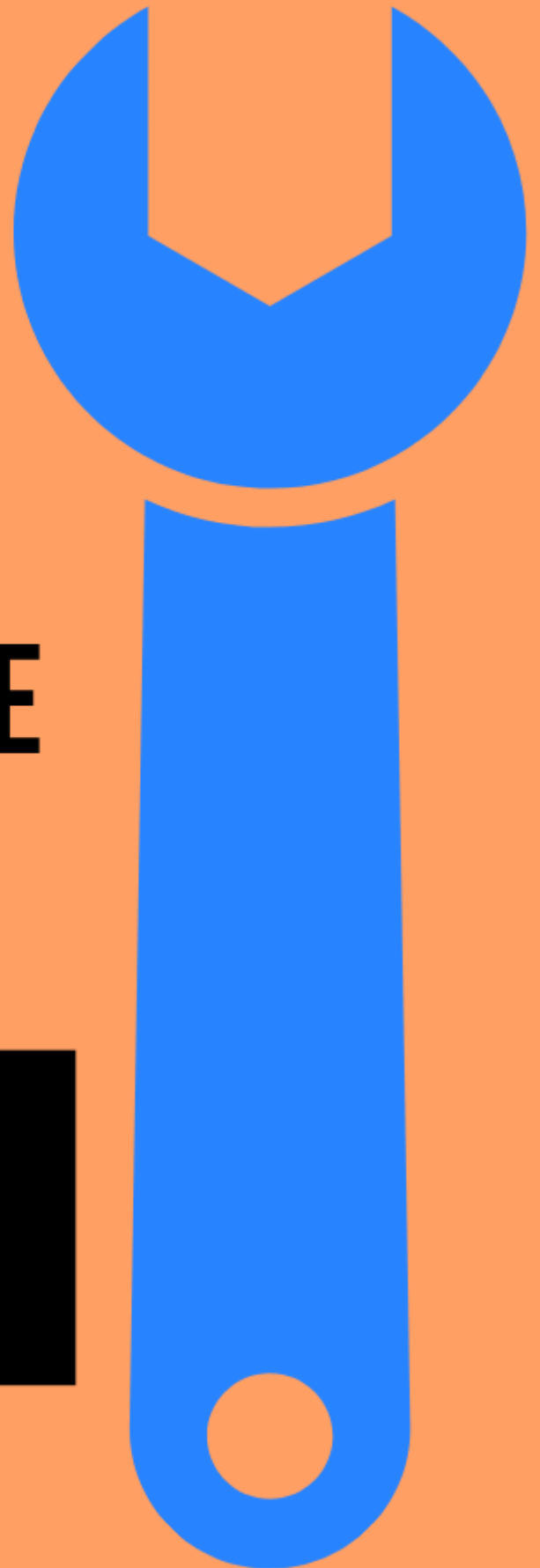


JULY, 2019

YOUTH JUSTICE TOOLKIT

Kee Tobar

Legal Aid Resources
for Supporting
Transition-aged Youth

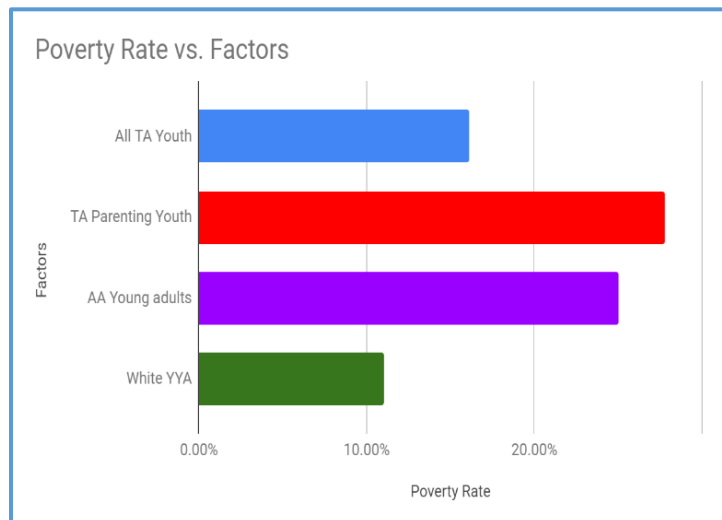


INTRODUCTION

Legal aid organizations were created to help poor people access justice. This mission expanded during President Lyndon Johnson’s “War on Poverty.” The aim of the “War on Poverty” was to not only relieve the symptom of poverty, but to cure it and prevent it. That mission still holds true today. Presently, civil legal aid organizations around the country help millions of low income people in the areas of housing, education, consumer rights, family, and employment law, as well as defending access to social services and benefits for people of all backgrounds. However, one group in particular could gain from legal aid organizations investing more attention and resources in the group – transition-aged youth. Transition-aged youth are youth between the ages 16-24. Legal aid organizations around the nation routinely prioritize older age groups, which is reflected in their outreach, intake model, and daily processes. For example, the intake model of many legal aid organizations is for the client to come to the organization during regular business hours, which serves as a barrier to younger clients who may not be able to afford transportation or navigate to the office during the day.

Once youth or young adults become clients, there are more barriers to effective services. For example, legal aid organizations may over-rely on mailing letters, rather than utilize texting or emailing, or leveraging social media which are more youth accessible. Legal aid organizations should consider adopting practices that are more youth-friendly in order to address high rates of poverty among a growing group of people who are in dire need of legal assistance.

Transition-aged youth and young adults are going through a financial crisis as a result of the trend of over-criminalization, a depleted public education system, and the lack of access to jobs, especially those that pay more than the minimum wage. This financial crisis is especially pronounced for parenting youth, youth of color, LGBTQIA+ youth, and youth with intersecting marginalized identities. The poverty rate for transition-aged youth is [16.1 percent](#).ⁱ For young parents, age 18-24, [27.8 percent](#) are poor.ⁱⁱ [One quarter](#) of black young adults, age 18-24 are living in poverty nationally, nearly twice the rate for white young adults.ⁱⁱⁱ



Legal aid organizations must seize this moment to figure out how to best reach and serve young people like transition-aged youth. This toolkit is designed as a practical tool to help legal services organizations more intentionally design programs to serve, properly advocate, and address the many needs of transition-aged youth and young adults using best practices in the field.

WHO:

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA AND FURTHER DISCUSSION OF MINORITY DISPARITY

Poverty is a national phenomenon that impacts people in all aspects of our society. However, in practice, age, family makeup, race, sexual orientation, and citizenship status all play a role in the disproportionality of who experiences poverty in this country.

Age

Nationally, [one in five](#) children (17.5 percent) live in poverty. For ages 18-24 (transition-aged), the poverty rate is [16.1](#) percent in comparison to the 12.3 percent average poverty rate for all people.^{iv} [One in ten](#) young adults ages 18-25 experienced a form of homelessness over a 12-month period.^v There were 53,438 homeless youth between ages 18-24 in January 2017, according to The US Housing and Urban Development (HUD) [2017 Annual Homeless Assessment Report](#) (See Appendix A for report), an increase of seven percent (6,367).^{vi} This number is especially startling when one accounts for the fact that due to [HUD's definition of homelessness](#), many homeless youth and young adults who couch surf¹ are not accounted for.^{vii} Over 1 million youths aged 14-25 receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments, a type of Social Security benefit for people who have serious disabilities and a low income, and approximately [2.2 million SSI recipients are younger than age 30](#).^{viii}

Parental Status

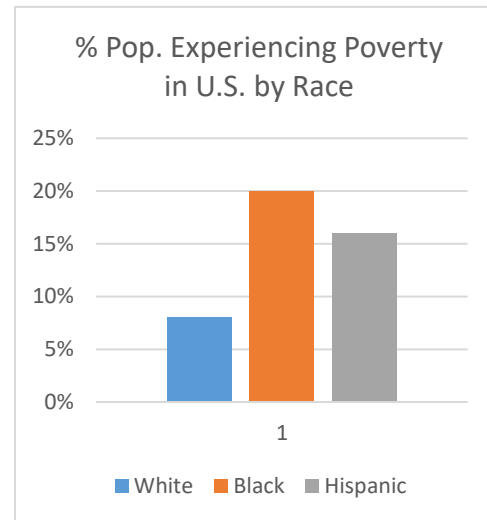
For teens and young adults who are parents, the numbers are particularly stark. In 2016, 75 percent of all teen births occurred to [18-19](#) year-olds.^{ix} Among parents 18-24, [27.8 percent are poor](#), as compared to 20.5 percent for all adult parents under 30 years of age.^x This means that young parents, who already bear the difficult task of raising a child, are also dealing with the crushing pressure of raising a child in poverty. This creates a cycle of poverty, as those who experience poverty as a child are more likely to experience [poverty](#) as an adult.^{xi}

Teen pregnancy impacts people of color disproportionately. [Hispanics and African Americans](#) have higher rates of teen pregnancy at 31.9 and 29.3 births per 1,000 in comparison to 14.3 for their white counterparts. Adding citizenship status to the equation further implicates the neutrality of poverty.

¹ "Couch Surfing" means to stay temporarily in a series of other people's homes, typically making use of improvised sleeping arrangements.

Race

Race, specifically institutional and structural racism, plays a major role in probability of poverty in America. People of color disproportionately experience poverty. A report done by the Henry J Kaiser Family Foundation in 2017 showed that 8% of White people experienced poverty in America as compared to [20% of Black people and 16% of Hispanic people](#).^{xii} This means that nationally, Black and Hispanic people are twice as likely, or more, to experience poverty in America than their White counterparts. In some states like Louisiana and Pennsylvania the [comparison](#) numbers are worse.^{xiii} This disproportional contact is unfortunately expressed also when isolating for age. Transition-aged youth of color disproportionately experience poverty. One quarter of Black young adults, age 18-24 are living in poverty nationally, nearly [twice](#) the rate for white young adults. It is vital that legal services organizations target and prioritize youth and young adults of color when determining delivery of resources to transition-aged youth, because they are the most impacted by and vulnerable to poverty within the subgroup.



Citizenship Status

While legal service agencies receiving Legal Services Corporation (LSC) funding are limited in servicing undocumented people, it is nonetheless important to discuss the impact citizenship status has on poverty for many people in this country, and specifically for youth and young adults.

For the majority of undocumented immigrant youth, poverty is almost inevitable. Many undocumented immigrant youth work in low wage employment where their labor is exploited and they are more likely to experience wage theft.^{xiv}

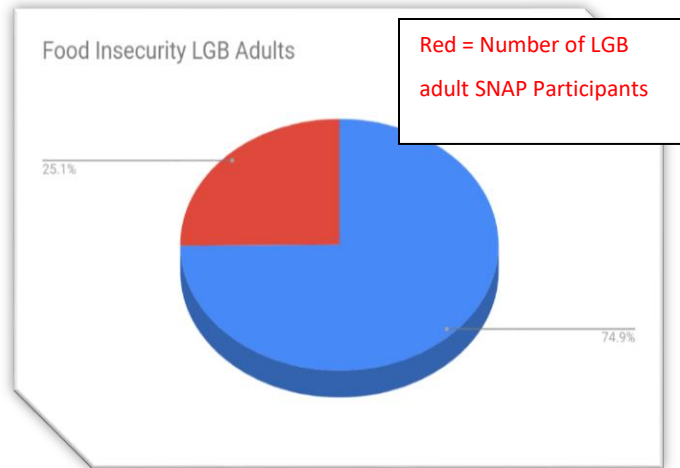
In addition, citizen-children of undocumented parents are directly affected by their parent's undocumented status^{xv} often facing food hardship, housing instability, and overcrowded living arrangements.^{xvi} Studies have found that citizen-children of undocumented parents are less likely to be enrolled in Medicaid, public housing, SNAP, and Social Security even though they are entitled to these programs based on their citizenship.^{xvii}

Sexual Orientation and Gender Nonconformity

Other populations like LGBTQIA+ youth and children of LGBTQIA+ adults, also disproportionately experience poverty. LGBTQIA+ youth are 120% more likely to experience homelessness than non-LGBTQIA+ youth. Nationally, approximately 2.2 million LGBT people experienced a time in the last year when they did not have enough money to feed themselves or their families according to a [UCLA Williams Institute Report](#) (see Appendix B for LGBTQ

SNAP report).^{xviii} More than [1 in 4 LGB adults](#) aged 18-44 participated in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

It is important that legal aid organizations acknowledge who is disproportionately affected by poverty in order to better inform prioritization and resource investment.^{xix} Legal aid organizations have a great opportunity to prevent a cycle of poverty for a generation of youth and young adults by deciding to invest appropriate resources into transition-aged youth, especially parenting youth, youth of color, LGBTQIA+ youth, undocumented youth, and the intersections thereof.



WHAT:

DEEPER DIVE INTO WHAT SERVICES YOUTH NEED

Transition-aged youth have a variety of complex needs that legal aid organizations are well-positioned to meet. Like others, transition-aged youths' legal issues arise from problems related to everyday living. For instance, custody or other family law issues, records and employment issues for youth who have interacted with the juvenile and/or criminal justice system, housing and public benefits issues, and many more standard civil legal issues. However, transition-aged youth also may have extra age related civil legal issues within all the aforementioned categories. For example, they may have emancipation issues, criminal records issues specific to juvenile records protections, or benefits issues that arise out of not being their own representative payee due to age. Below we will discuss many of the common civil legal issues for transition-aged youth.

Family Law

Custody (Non-government Involvement)

Some transition-aged youth are parents. Many young parents are not aware of their legal rights as parents. Young parents may not understand that even as minors they have the legal right to autonomously parent their children. This confusion is even more prevalent for youth who may be experiencing homelessness and who may have an informal arrangement with a family member with regard to their child's living situation. Having access to a knowledgeable civil legal aid attorney can help



young parents make the best decisions for themselves and their child.

Child Custody (Child Welfare Cases)

Many parenting transition-aged youth are also foster youth or may have previously had child welfare experience. A prevalent issue with this group may be the erroneous belief that their legal rights to their children are compromised because they, the parent, are in the child welfare system or may have had previous child welfare involvement. Helping to educate parenting foster youth on their parental rights while in the system could help provide agency for parenting foster youth and help to keep children of foster youth from unnecessarily touching the system (see Appendix C for Pennsylvania teen parents in care fact sheet).^{xx} Furthermore, many young parents who have not had previous involvement with the child welfare system are unaware of their parental rights with regard to a child welfare investigation (see Appendix E).

Emancipation

Many transition-aged youth who have complicated relationships with their parental figure or guardian may seek out emancipation. Emancipation is a legal mechanism by which a minor is free from control by their parents or guardians, and the parents or guardians are freed from any and all responsibility toward the child. Civil legal aid attorneys could help youth navigate the

emancipation process, where appropriate.

However, successful emancipations are rare due to stringent requirements. For example, in Pennsylvania a minor must establish themselves as a self-supporting individual, independent of parental control. The minor must show the judge

Client Story

E.L. is a nineteen year old male who came to CLS desperately seeking a juvenile expungement. He wanted to apply for jobs but felt that he would be turned away because of a juvenile record that he incurred when he was fifteen. CLS attorneys were able to successfully advocate for an early expungement for E.L. and also inform him of the laws regarding juvenile records in Philadelphia, so he would no longer have to worry about how his juvenile record would affect his future potential employment.

“I didn’t want my kid to grow up in the environment I grew up in, so I left my home, but now I realize that being out here in the streets is putting both me and my baby at risk. And now I have the added pressure of making sure my child isn’t taken by DHS because of my housing situation. All because I wanted to protect my child.”

-S.K. Age 17

that they are in a position to live on their own and support themselves and that they have done both things in the past. The determination will be made off past and present demonstration, not solely future ability.

Employment

Employment is a major factor in a youth's ability to successfully transition into adulthood. Transition-aged youth may face barriers to employment caused by criminal and juvenile justice records, as well as other forms of employment discrimination.

For example, many transgender youth face discrimination when seeking employment due to their gender marker assigned at birth. Because of their incorrect gender marker, an employment interview may serve as an outing experience due to their legal names and/or gender identity not matching their chosen name or presentation as assumed by the potential employer. The outing experience, in and of itself, is not the only negative outcome; the outing experience may also serve as a reason for discrimination and rejection from employment.

Having access to an attorney who can assist with expungements, name changes, employment discrimination issues, wage theft and other employment related issues can be life-changing for transition-aged youth.

Housing and Utilities

Across the country, people are facing an [eviction crisis](#) and youth and young adults are no exception (see Appendix D for eviction crisis map). Transition-aged youth have higher rates of poverty in comparison to the national averages at 16.1 percent versus 12.3 percent. A higher rate of poverty is likely to mean relatively high rates of evictions and housing instability, since [rent prices have increased](#) nationally.^{xxi} Youth may not be aware of their protections during the rental process and may be even more vulnerable to unfair evictions due to their lack of housing law sophistication. Common issues for transition-aged youth related to housing and utility issues are:

Landlord Tenant Issues

Youth who are transitioning out of independent living housing programs are vulnerable to eviction due to the uptick in bill responsibility once the youth has hit the age threshold. Many youth, specifically transition-aged foster youth have a housing subsidy if they are in an independent living program. The subsidy stops once the young person is no longer in the care of child welfare. Once the subsidy stops the youth then may become vulnerable to eviction due to inability to pay costly standard rental rates.

Utility Issues

Youth may have utility bills issues once they become an adult due to a parent or an adult who had access to their personal information, committing fraud and using their names to open utility accounts.

Client Story

A.J is a twenty-one year-old African American male. He is a former foster youth who had a history of housing insecurity. A.J was able to get into a housing program for housing insecure foster youth. The program paid for 80% of housing cost and all utilities. Unfortunately, the housing program only housed youth until age twenty. After having to move out A.J. was informed that he owed hundreds in utilities and wouldn't be able to have utilities in his new place until the debt was paid.

Youth who participated in independent living programs may have utility bill issues if they believed the program was responsible for paying their utility bills and the bills weren't paid. Legal aid attorneys can help youth through the appeal process with regard to payment assistance programs or advocate directly with the utility company. ^{xxii}

Public Housing and Record Issues

For transition-age youth who live in a Public Housing Authority home, incorrect information regarding the consequences of their criminal record may cause improper eviction. Only certain crimes guarantee rejection from public housing and most people will have the opportunity to put forth "mitigating

circumstances." Having access to a legal aid attorney who can help put forth a case for mitigating circumstances and other exemptions, including disability exemptions, can help young people avoid unnecessary and/or illegal evictions.

Public Benefits

Parenting transition-age youth who meet financial requirements may be eligible for Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and Women Infants and Children (WIC) benefits. Both parenting and non-parenting youth may be eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI). While youth are eligible to participate in these programs, they may experience incorrect denials, improper reduction of benefits, and benefit cutoffs.

Incorrect denials

Due to new federal rule changes to SNAP, while some college students are ineligible, many are newly eligible. Students are eligible if they receive any work-study aid, if they are working 20 hours a week, if they are under age 18, if they have a physical or mental disability, or if they have young children. Also, many youth are incorrectly informed that they do not qualify for SNAP benefits for reasons such as: their age, because they live with their parents, or because they live in a homeless shelter. The truth is:

- Some youth who are under eighteen, but live independent of their guardian or parent and do not live under “parental supervision,” are not barred from receiving SNAP solely due to their age.^{xxiii}
- Youth who are twenty-two or older can live with their parents or parental figure and receive their own SNAP benefits as long as they prepare and buy their food separately and also meet the other general eligibility requirements.
- Youth who live in a homeless shelter are eligible to receive SNAP despite living in the shelter and receiving meals.^{xxiv} It is important that youth have a civil legal advocate because having one can mean the difference between having food or not.^{xxv}

Improper reduction of benefits

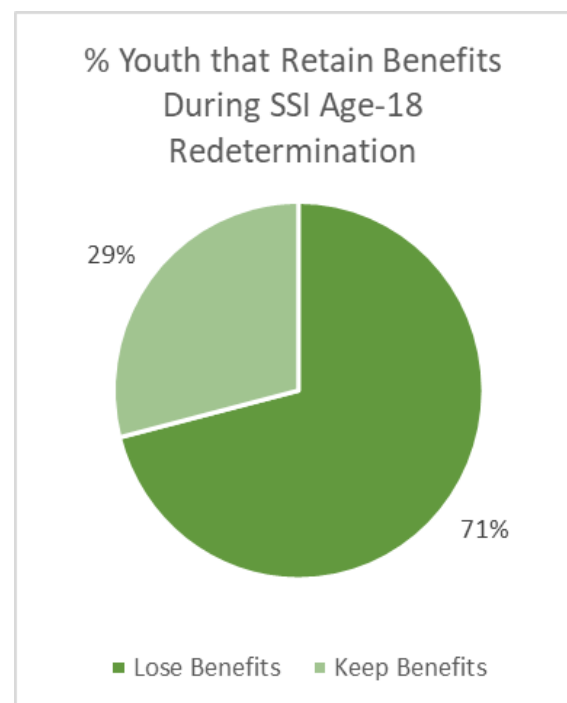
Youth may have issues with incorrect financial calculations by Social Security and welfare office staff and may have their benefits improperly reduced due to the error. Many youth may have their benefits reduced or terminated if their work or school hours or income are miscalculated for programs like TANF, SNAP, or SSI.

(SSI) Age 18 redetermination cutoffs

In Pennsylvania, 71% of youth who are receiving benefits as a child lose their benefits during the age-18 redetermination. Legal representation can help youth maintain this vital source of income after age 18.

Appeal Denials

Furthermore, many homeless transition-age youth with mental health needs may be eligible for SSI but may not have the ability to access treatment or produce an appropriate application and thus are rejected. Intervention by a legal aid attorney during the application or appeal window can make the difference between a young person going deeper into homelessness and a young person obtaining the income needed to establish housing stability.^{xxvi}



Conclusion

Civil legal aid attorneys can have a profound effect on transition-age youth through advocacy concerning these issues and a variety of others. However, while recognition of where legal aid organizations can best offer value to this population is important, it is not the only step. It is vital that legal aid organizations analyze how they are going to provide representation. Representing transition-age youth is different than representing older adults. The differences

occur in best practices regarding outreach, intake, and advocacy. The section below will indicate best practices for legal aid organizations when serving transition-age youth.

How:

BEST PRACTICES, EXHIBIT MODELS IN AREAS OF OUTREACH, INTAKE, AND ADVOCACY



Outreach

Outreach is a vital component to connecting transition-age youth to legal aid organizations. Transition-age youth have not traditionally been the primary demographic served by legal aid organizations, and as a result, legal aid organizations have not focused on outreach that is adolescent-age-informed. Being intentional about age-informed culturally relevant materials and advertisement placements, and securing strategic partnerships and collaboration, are extremely important in successfully connecting transition-age youth to legal assistance.

Advertisement

Locations of advertisements should include youth serving organizations. Social media, i.e. Facebook/Twitter/Instagram should be a major platform used when trying to connect with transition-aged youth. However, youth mainly frequent organizations by word of mouth, so it is important to make sure a youth's first experience with your organization is a good experience.

Partnerships

It is very important to know where youth access services and resources in the community and to collaborate and exchange information with those organizations and institutions. Coalition building will keep all parties informed of available services and resources, and streamline the delivery of said services and resources to youth. In collaborating with partner organizations, it is a best practice to intermittently go to partner locations to provide services. One service you can provide to youth at partner locations is legal clinics. To develop a successful legal clinic it is important that one has these three components:

1. Great communication with partner organization staff as to scope of clinic, logistics such as best days, time and places within the organization to conduct the clinic. Proper communication and collaboration with partnering staff can impact advertising methods and logistics, and thus, greatly affect the outcome of your clinic.
2. Trauma and adolescent development training is especially important when partnering with organizations whose youth population are in crisis.

3. Have everything on hand that is needed to do your job, including but not limited to, an internet hotspot, necessary legal documents, i.e. retainers, appeal forms, laptop, and multiple staff persons available to help.

Having proper communication with partnering organization, the appropriate documentation and tools necessary to start on site, and the necessary staff persons available to handle various issues will give you a better chance of facilitating a successful clinic. Having strong partnerships is also important in being able to provide effective referrals. If possible, one should try to negotiate priority response between partnering organizations regarding the servicing of clients. Youth have a variety of issues that may intersect with the legal issue you are servicing that are outside of your organization's scope or expertise. It is important to have partnerships that can fill the necessary gaps in need as it may ultimately impact your ability to get the best outcome for your client.

Materials

Materials should, if possible, give a young person all the information necessary to move forward with next steps. Materials include relevant fact sheets created by your organization and/or partner organizations, necessary legal documentation i.e. appeals forms, retainers, confidentiality waivers, and flyers for your services or common referral organizations.

Staff should also have any documents needed for the young person to sign (see Appendix F-retainers for transition-age youth).^{xxvii} For example, any paperwork needed for an appeal, releases to gather needed documents and information, and retainer agreements should be available when doing clinics at partnering organizations. The retainer should be written clearly and succinctly and should lay out the terms and scope of representation. Having these materials on-hand will help reduce follow-up appointments, which can be burdensome and difficult to coordinate.

Some materials should be intersectional in their substance. Young people, like all of us, have multiple identities that interplay with their legal needs. Materials given to young people should incorporate that understanding.^{xxviii} For example, there should be materials that target disabled youth who are also foster youth. There are specific rules that apply to this demographic. Another example would be creating tenants' rights documents for LGBTQIA+ low income renters.

Information provided in materials should be written in youth friendly language.

Materials should exist electronically, and not solely in paper form.

Materials should be accessible in the format that best fits the young person's needs. Many young people prefer receiving organizational flyers or documents electronically instead of in paper form.

Intake

Intake Location

Legal service organizations must go where youth are. It is best practice to partner with outside youth-serving organizations to do intake at their organizations. Going to spaces where youth spend time and are already comfortable increases the likelihood that youth will access services. When possible, organizations should have childcare. Many youth are young parents and may be unable to come to appointments if they cannot bring their child. In an effort to be more effective organizations should facilitate intake in the community as much as possible if your office is located in the downtown area of your city. Many young people cannot afford the transportation cost to get to appointments downtown. Doing intake in the community can counteract transportation difficulties.

Intake Hours

Extend Intake Hours

Many youth and young adults are unable to come to the office during traditional intake hours, or even during 9-5 business hours. Extending intake hours would allow young people who work or go to school during traditional office hours to make appointments. Extending intake to the weekend through general office hours or doing weekend clinics in partnership with youth-serving organization events would also expand youth's ability to access legal services.

Phone/Internet

If extending intake to after 5pm isn't a possibility financially or administratively, opening a phone or online initial intake option could also be beneficial to this demographic.

Intake Form

Holistic Intake Form

If your legal services organization has multiple practice areas include relevant questions that can quickly identify if the youth needs help in multiple areas (see Appendix F for YJP Legal Screening Tool). In 2018, 85 % of our youth clients had multiple legal problems. Many came in for one issue but through our holistic toolkit we were able to uncover multiple issues. Young people may not know that many of the issues they are dealing with are legal issues with a legal solution.

Multiple Contacts

When you first meet a young client it is important to obtain as many sources of contact information as possible, due to this population's transient nature. In addition to phone numbers, addresses, and email addresses, other sources could include social media information, relatives' information, or programs that the youth regularly uses contact information.

Ask Pronouns

Your intake form should include a question about what pronouns youth use. It is important to not assume a youth's gender based on gender presentation. Asking this simple question can help to build a positive and trusting relationship.

Advocacy

Adolescent Development Informed Expectations

Age Appropriate Model

Be flexible and age appropriate with expectations for clients. Legal services staff expectations for clients are based on a sophisticated adult model of responsiveness. However, this model does not fit well for all youth and young adults, especially for adolescent youth who may have problems with time management and navigating complicated systems. It is vital that all staff who interact youth, including paralegals, social workers, interns, and attorneys, receive trauma informed and adolescent development training. Staff persons who are not attorneys share much of the workload regarding youth who may need a variety of interventions and resources. They are often the key component in obtaining a successful case management system and are likely to be the main point of contact with youth. Thus, it is necessary that all staff persons are trained on how to properly advocate for and interact with youth clients.

Motivational Interviewing

Become skilled in motivational interviewing.² It is important to have buy-in from young clients when representing them. Before coming to a legal aid office, young clients may have had negative prior interactions with lawyers or systems, and have likely been navigating multiple challenging situations. Thus, they may come to meetings upset and/or unprepared. It is important that the legal services staff listen and reflect back the client's thoughts so that the client can hear their own reasons and motivations for coming in, expressed back to them. Legal services staff should also ask young clients open-ended questions about their goals and wishes, to better understand how to effectively represent them and build positive relationships. Even when more specific information is needed later to identify legal issues and next steps, starting interviews using an open-ended style helps to get the relationship off to a positive start.

Follow-up

Call youth and young adult clients early and often. It is important to follow-up with young clients, ideally within several days of meeting, and to consistently keep in touch in order to build a positive working relationship and keep youth engaged in the representation.

Contracting with Underage Youth

Contracts are usually written with adults in mind, as many believe youth are not able to legally enter into contract. However, although the contracts for youth under eighteen are generally voidable, the young person can choose to honor or void the contract. Therefore, it is highly unlikely that a contract will be voided solely due to age if the young person wants the service.

Language in the retainer should be very clear and written in plain language regarding the scope of representation (See Appendix F).

² Motivational interviewing is a counseling method that helps people resolve ambivalent feelings and insecurities to find the internal motivation they need to change their behavior.

The retainer should be signed by the youth or young adult (See Appendix F). However before allowing a young person to sign a retainer, one should ensure that the young person understands what they are signing. You can ensure this by writing the retainer in accessible language, asking the young person if they understand what is written or being read aloud, and asking the young person to summarize what was read or written to ensure comprehension.

Youth Centered Advocacy

All advocacy and decision-making should be youth-centered and youth directed, focused around the youth's explicit statement of desired outcome. No substantial choice should be made without consulting the youth and informing them of their options.

All decisions should be made based on the desires of the youth, even if the youth is a minor and has a parent or guardian who is very involved with the case.

Confidentiality and attorney client privilege between the staff person and the youth must remain even with regards to parents and guardians. The Rules of Professional Conduct ([Rule 1.14](#)) state that the lawyer, shall, as far as reasonably possible, maintain a normal client-lawyer relationship with the minor, particularly concerning communication. This means that the attorney, and thus other staff, owe a duty of confidentiality to the minor, even with respect to the child's parent or guardian.

Culturally Competent and Intersectional Service Model

As discussed above, many of legal services organizations' potential clients may have a variety of identities regarding race, sexual orientation and gender identity, disability status, etc... Specifically, most clients may be people of color, many may not be heterosexual, and some may not be cisgender. Therefore, it is important that the environment in which services are provided is culturally informed, free of discrimination, both overt and subtle, and respectful of all people and their agency regardless of one's assumptions.

An intersectional service model means understanding how one's multiple identities may be affecting their legal issue or situation in general and providing advocacy that is responsive to this fact. An example would be listening to a disabled transgender client tell you that they stopped going to therapy because the former therapist was transphobic and responding by attempting to find a therapist who is great with servicing disabled clients and who has LGBTQIA+ sensitivity and competency training.

Being youth-centered, building partnerships and being culturally competent, intersectional, and non-discriminatory will likely ensure positive experience between transition-aged youth clients and legal services organizations. The more we connect transition-age youth to legal services organizations, the more we can attempt to prevent and reduce poverty in America.

APPENDIX

Appendix A: 2017 Annual Homeless Assessment Report



The U.S. Department of
Housing and Urban Development
OFFICE OF COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT



PART 1:
Point-in-Time Estimates of Homelessness

The 2017 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress

DECEMBER 2017

Appendix B: UCLA Williams Institute Report

Food Insecurity And SNAP Participation In The LGBT Community



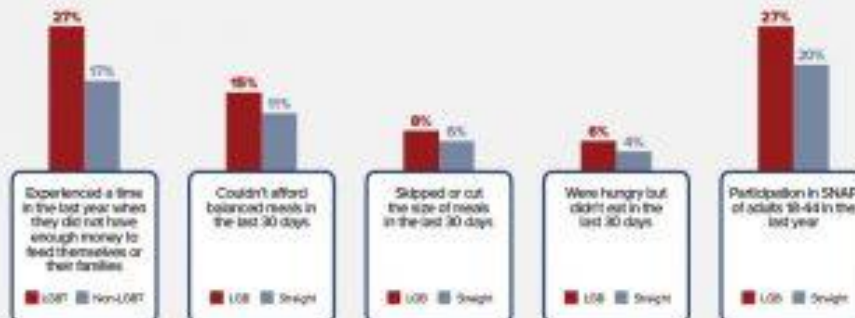
A new Williams Institute report finds that food insecurity and participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) are common among LGBT people, and that LGBT individuals experience food insecurity and SNAP participation at higher levels than their non-LGBT counterparts. People are described as "food insecure" when they have limited or uncertain access to adequate food. This infographic provides key findings. The full report is at <http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/research/lgbt-food-insecurity-2016/>.

2.2 million



Approximately 2.2 million LGBT people experienced a time in the last year when they did not have enough money to feed themselves and their families.

There are a number of different experiences that can be assessed to determine food insecurity. Participation in SNAP is another way to assess risk of food insecurity, because a person or household must generally be below poverty-level income and resource thresholds to qualify for SNAP benefits.



LGBT adults are 1.6 times more likely than non-LGBT adults to not have enough money for the food that they or their families needed at some point in the last year when differences in gender, age, educational attainment, and race/ethnicity are taken into account.

Among LGBT people...

Food insecurity is not distributed evenly across the LGBT community. Rather, women, certain racial and ethnic minorities, unmarried individuals, and those with children in the home are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity.



...did not have enough money for the food that they or their families needed in the past year.

Made possible with a grant from the ConAgra Foods Foundation

Appendix C: Teen Parents in Care Factsheet



Teen Parents in Care

Teen parents “in care” are young mothers and fathers who are placed by DHS in foster care, a mother/baby placement, or other placement.

What rights do I have as a teen parent in care?

- To physical and legal custody of your baby. Your child should not be found dependent just because you are in care.
- To parent your child.
- To live in the most family-like setting available.
- To visit with your child if they are not living with you, unless a court has ordered otherwise.
- To an attorney to represent you as a parent if DHS files a petition to have your baby found dependent.

Will my baby live with me?

Yes, if there is an appropriate placement available. All efforts should be made to find a placement for you and your baby together. Talk to your lawyer if you and your baby are not placed together.

What types of services can my child and I receive?

You should be placed with family if a family member’s home is available and approved. You should receive independent living services, parenting support, and assistance with getting child care.

How do I get child care?

DHS or CUA should help you apply for or provide you with child care for your child. Many teen parents will qualify for subsidized child care. To determine if you are eligible and find out where to apply, contact 1-877-4-PA-KIDS or 1-800-392-3131. If you are out of care and receiving TANF (welfare) or food stamps, check with your welfare caseworker to find out if you are eligible for child care assistance through your local welfare office.

What is child support and how do I apply for it?

Child support is money paid by parents who do not live with the child to support the care of the child. You can file for child support at your county’s domestic relations court (in Philadelphia, 1501 Arch Street, 8th Floor). If you are out of care and receiving TANF, the government can file for child support for you. But, you may receive only up to \$100 in “pass through” benefits (up to \$200 if you have more than one child). The rest goes to reimburse the state for the cost of your benefits.

Can I be asked to pay child support when I am in care?

YES. Just like teen parents have many of the rights of older parents, they also have some of the same responsibilities. You can be ordered to pay child support if you are in care, if you are a minor, or if you





Teen Parents in Care

are still in high school. But, child support is calculated based on your income or your capacity to earn income, so if you fall into one of these categories and do not work or are unable to work, it is not likely that you will be ordered to pay support.

Staying in Care Past 18

How long can I stay under DHS care?

In many cases, you can stay in care until you are 21. You can do this if you came into the system before age 18 and if you are in what is called a "program of treatment or instruction." If you stay in care, you might remain in your foster home or group home, or you might move to a supervised independent living (SIL) or transitional living placement (TLP). In Philadelphia, staying in care is called having a "board extension."

Why would I want to stay in care past age 18?

If you stay in care or re-enter care, you can continue to receive services through DHS. This can help you get:

- A place to live
- Stability, support and guidance from staff
- Health insurance
- Access to supervised independent living and apartment programs
- Food, clothes and essentials
- An opportunity to finish high school or other schooling
- Involvement of the court and your advocate to make sure things are going ok

It is true that staying in care limits your freedom. Many 18 year olds want to be on their own and out of the system. Just think about it before you leave and make sure you have a plan – including a place to live and an income that will cover your expenses. Remember, you can change your mind and sign back into care later if you change your mind.

Get Help

- For information and referrals, call Juvenile Law Center at 215-625-0551 or visit their website at www.jlc.org; or call the CLS Family Advocacy Hotline at 215-981-3765.
- For legal assistance with child care, custody, and support, call Philadelphia Legal Assistance at (215) 981-3838.
- Call DHS if you don't know who your caseworker is: 215-683-4347.
- Call the court if you don't know who your lawyer is or when your next court date is: 215-686-4119.





Teen Parent Rights When DHS Investigates

Initial Contact. Remember, DHS has to respond to every call they get about abuse or neglect. While some people have to report abuse or neglect (i.e. teachers and doctors), anyone can call including neighbors, friends and family.

DHS Investigation. When DHS comes to check on you and your kids it can feel scary and invasive. DHS will talk to you, your children, your family, and your neighbors. They may request medical records or school records. You should be polite and answer their questions.

- Remember: what you say to the DHS worker is not confidential and can be used against you in court! Talk to your lawyer if you have any questions.
- Remember: if DHS wants to remove your kids from you, you should give the DHS worker the names and phone numbers of relatives who may be willing to care for your child.
- Remember: if DHS removes your kids from you in an “emergency” situation you will get to see a judge within three days and a lawyer will be there to represent you!

DHS and Court. DHS can take someone to court if they are not cooperating with an investigation or if they have or want to remove your kids from you.

YOUR RIGHTS IN COURT

- You have the same rights as adult parents.
- You have the right to a lawyer who will represent your wishes as a parent.
- If your lawyer does not return your phone calls or you do not feel like that are representing your wishes you can request a new lawyer.
- DHS has to make an effort to keep your family together or return your children to you.

- DHS must help you get services to become a better parent, and to be able to provide for your children.
- For example, if your DHS worker or the judge says you have to go to counseling, your worker should help you find a program and give you tokens to get there.
- DHS has a responsibility to try and place your child with family. You should write down the names and phone numbers of family members who might be willing to help care for your child.

REMEMBER

- It is really important that you attend all court dates and meetings. Show the judge and everyone else that you are taking things seriously.
- Important decisions about your family will be made in court and at meetings

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS TO CALL

- Call the CLS Family Advocacy Hotline if you have questions: 215-981-3765
- Call DHS if you don't know who your caseworker is: 215-683-4347
- Call the court if you don't know who your lawyer is or when your next court date is: 215-686-4119



UNDERSTANDING EVICTION IN

PHILADELPHIA COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

A presentation generated by The Eviction Lab at Princeton University

Data extracted on 2019-06-05

For further information, visit evictionlab.org



Appendix F: Retainers for Transition-Aged Youth

COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICES, INC. RETAINER AGREEMENT

1. Retainer

I, _____ agree to receive legal counseling and/or representation from Community Legal Services Inc. (CLS).

2. Scope and Length of Representation

_____, a CLS staff member, has agreed to provide the following services:

-
- CLS will represent me only as described above. The CLS staff member assigned to my case does not and will not represent me with all my legal issues.
 - If CLS decides to represent me on a different issue I will be asked to sign another retainer.
 - CLS will update me about my case. If given permission, CLS can also update my parent/guardian about my case if I am unavailable.
 - The staff member representing me may discuss my case with other persons as needed to help me, but specific information about the details of my case will not otherwise be shared with others without my permission.

3. Partnership

I will work with CLS the best I can as they work on my case. I will:

- Respond to telephone calls, texts, emails, and/or letters from CLS when possible
- Answer questions the best I can and tell the truth.
- Ask questions when I am confused about my case
- Provide all information and papers requested by CLS as best I can.
- Attend all important hearings and appointments.
 - If I cannot attend an appointment or hearing, I will let my representative know as soon as I know.
- Update my representative if I move or change phone numbers.
- Update CLS if my income or my family's income changes.

4. Attorney's Fees/Cost

CLS's services are generally free. If CLS has expenses due to handling my case, they can choose to pay those expenses for me, if I can't. However, if I get money because I won my case, I will repay CLS for expenses paid in my case. CLS may ask me to pay for a copy of my file if I request it.

5. Termination of Representation

The CLS staff member working on my case can choose to stop representing me for a variety of reasons, including:

- a. They completed the task we agreed to in this document
- b. I'm no longer financially eligible
- c. I have not participated in the partnership in the ways agreed to above

6. Client Can Terminate Representation

At any time, I can ask my CLS representative to withdraw from my case. If I make this request, my representative will stop representing me in accordance with the professional legal rules of ethics. I also have the right to make a complaint about my services CLS provided me.

CLS gave me a copy of this agreement and answered any questions that I had about it.

Client's Signature

Date

CLS Representative's Signature

Date

Appendix G: Youth Justice Project Legal Screening Tool

YOUTH JUSTICE PROJECT

LEGAL SCREENING

Legal Name: _____ **DOB:** _____

Preferred Name: _____ **Social Security #:** _____

Gender: _____ **Pronoun:** he/him she/her they/them other: _____

Race: _____ **Sexual Orientation:** _____

I. Family & Safety Issues

Do you have any children? Y N

Do your children live with you? Y N

If yes, do you receive child support? Y N

If no, do you pay child support? Y N

Do you have a custody order? Y N

Has DHS been involved with your children? Y N

Do you have any concern regarding partner violence toward you or your children? Y N

Were you ever in DHS/foster care? Y N

How old were you when you were in care? Age(s): _____

Would you like information about housing and services from DHS
through extended foster care? Y N

II. Justice System & Employment

Have you ever been arrested in the juvenile/family court system? Y N

Have you ever been arrested in the adult court system? Y N

Have you ever been denied a job or license because of a juvenile or criminal record? Y N

Are you currently employed? Y N

Are you having any workplace issues (e.g. not being paid properly)? Y N

If you have children/are pregnant:

IV. Education Issues

V. Other Issues

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| Were you born outside of the US? | Y | N |
| Do you have any immigration concerns? | Y | N |
| Do you need copies of any identifying documents, like birth certificate or photo ID? | Y | N |
| Do you need updated identifying documents due to changes in name or gender? | Y | N |
| Have you ever had housing in your own name? | Y | N |
| Were you ever evicted? | Y | N |
| Do you or those you live with have any problems with gas, water, heat or electric bills? | Y | N |
| Have anyone in the household received a shut-off notice for any of these utilities? | Y | N |

Notes:

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