

Report on Youth for Tomorrow

Report Mandate

The 2019 Acts of Assembly, Chapter 780, Item 348 I, appropriates \$100,000 in State Fiscal Year 2019 and 2020 to the organization Youth for Tomorrow (YFT) to provide “comprehensive residential, education, and counseling services to at-risk adolescent youth of the Commonwealth of Virginia who have been sexually exploited, including victims of sex trafficking.” The appropriations language instructs the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) to include in the contract with YFT specific goods and services that will be delivered to adolescents and youth of the Commonwealth as a result of this appropriation. The appropriations language also requires YFT to submit an annual report which is due to the Governor and the Chairmen of the Senate Finance and House Appropriations Committees by October 1 of each year.

This document is the State Fiscal Year 2023 year-end report submitted by Youth for Tomorrow.

Background

Youth for Tomorrow is committed to servicing female victims of Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking (DMST). According to Shared Hope International, DMST is the commercial sexual exploitation of American children within U.S. borders. It is the “recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act,” where the person is a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident under the age of 18 years. The age of the victim is the critical issue, and there is no requirement to prove force, fraud, or coercion used to secure the victim’s actions. The law recognizes the effects of psychological manipulation by the trafficker, as well as the effect of threats of harm, which traffickers/pimps use to maintain control over their young victims. DMST includes but is not limited to the commercial sexual exploitation of children through prostitution, pornography, and/or stripping.

YFT Services Overview

Since 2008, YFT has served over 312 DMST victims. During this grant period, July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023 YFT served 35 victims in our Residential Treatment Center in our Girls on a Journey (GOAJ) program. 3 of these 35 victims were covered through the funding of this grant. In the past year, many of the referrals that YFT has received for DMST victims have been connected to the Department of Social Services and therefore funding has not needed to be accessed. However, there are many referrals connected to law enforcement as well as parental placements, both of which require these funds for treatment and services. Referrals had also decreased significantly when the pandemic began, and many human trafficking initiatives were slowed down.

During this reporting period, YFT served three DMST victims through grant funding. The three victims were from Waynesboro, Virginia; Rockville, Maryland; and Stafford, Virginia. The average length of stay (LOS) for these girls was nine to twelve months. The girls ranged in ages between 13 and 17 years old.

During this period, all three girls made adequate progress, meeting more than 85% of their Individual Service Plan (ISP) goals. All three girls were successfully reunified with their families and moved on to successfully function in their community.

Since funding began in August 2013, YFT has served over 312 DMST victims in the GOAJ program. While many victims come to YFT with funding sources, some victims have no means of obtaining funding for residential treatment services.

Of the three girls that YFT served during this reporting year, they were all referred to the program as DMST victims – either by law enforcement after being identified as victims or at risk of exploitation, or by parental placement by parents who were concerned about their child struggling with trauma after being exploited. All were assessed clinically and identified as DMST victims by YFT clinical staff through a comprehensive clinical assessment.

Project Service Objectives & Outputs

***Objective 1:** Youth For Tomorrow clinical staff will provide individual counseling to minor victims of sex trafficking which address their victimization and enable them to develop coping skills which relate to the mental health aspects of their victimization (i.e., trust, attachment issues, self-image, self-esteem, trauma-bond, anxiety, etc.), preventing long term mental health impacts.*

YFT clinical staff provided 55 individual counseling sessions to three girls over 12 months.

***Objective 2:** Youth For Tomorrow clinical staff will provide group counseling related to victimization. Clinical staff will also identify other group therapy needs such as substance, chemical education, etc.*

YFT provided 110 weekly group counseling and/or family therapy sessions to the girls during this reporting period. Group counseling included trauma, healthy relationships, coping skills, and GOAJ. Family therapy sessions are provided by clinical staff to focus on the needs of the family as a whole, to address trauma experienced by all members of the family, and prepare the child to return home.

***Objective 3:** Youth For Tomorrow will provide residential services to minor victims of sex trafficking, ensuring 24-hour, supervision process group related to cooperation and social skills development; life skills education and recreation.*

YFT residential staff provided 71 hours of recreational activities and leisure activities during this reporting period.

***Objective 4:** Youth For Tomorrow will enroll minor victim of sex trafficking into the residential school, providing special education services when required and secondary level course work in-line with Virginia Department of Education Standards.*

YFT educational staff provided 1,716 hours or 266 days of educational instruction during the period of project funding.

***Objective 5:** Youth For Tomorrow will ensure that minor victims meet regularly with their family, parents or legal guardians. Victims will be allowed phone calls and visitation as well as home visit off campus. Family will participate in family counseling.*

YFT Case Managers coordinated 19 home visits and 9 on-campus visit. The relations between the residents and their families were greatly improved by family therapy sessions provided by YFT therapists and through these family visits coordinated by YFT Case Managers.

Objective 6: *An individual service plan will be completed within 30 days of admissions, which outlines the minor victims service needs as related to her primary reason for placement (sex trafficking); clinical, education and life skills assessments; and transition plan.*

YFT Case Managers developed Individual Service Plans (ISPs) for each of the three residents. ISPs are completed by the resident's treatment team within 30 days of admissions, and ISPs reviews are completed every 30 days while the resident is in care. All ISPs can be found in the residents' files.

Objective 7: *Minor victims will participate in weekly life skills instruction based on the ARISE Life Management Skills curriculum. These skills will ensure victims are able to eventually live independently.*

YFT residential staff provided 60 hours of life skills activities during this reporting period.

Objective 8: *Youth For Tomorrow case management staff will identify long-term partnerships with local service providers who offer medical and mental health services to residents, when needed.*

YFT has a memorandum of agreement with Greater Prince William Community Health Center to provide medical services to clients.

Objective 9: *Youth For Tomorrow nursing staff will provide first aid, medication management, coordinate medical service or refer residents to community agencies for medical services. Victims placed at YFT require medical services related, but not limited to pediatrics, gynecology, dental, and eye care.*

YFT nursing staff coordinated a total of 8 medical appointments this reporting period including: 1 medication management, 4 dental, 1 OBGYN and 1 Optometry appointment.

Service Outcomes

Youth For Tomorrow's GOAJ program has served 35 adolescent girls in the last 12 months, including the 3 girls directly benefiting from VDSS funding this past year. The majority of them stayed in the GOAJ program for more than 60 days and were included in the outcomes below:

- 75% met more than 85% of their individual treatment plan goals;
- 100% receive 30, 60, and 90 day follow-up Aftercare contacts from their YFT Case Manager. Many also continue to receive services from YFT including counseling, educational supports, and living supports; and
- 85% have successfully transitioned into the community (i.e., reside at home,

maintained employment, and/or enrolled in school).

Conclusion

Youth For Tomorrow is licensed by the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) to provide care to residents 12 years of age and up to 18 years of age who receive services from the local departments of social services or other public agencies.

The \$100,000 grant appropriation through VDSS has served three teenage female victims throughout the 12 months of services provided during this grant period July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022. Youth for Tomorrow has matched dollar for dollar the 24/7 average cost per child for these comprehensive program services with the funding provided by VDSS through the General Assembly appropriation to serve victims. These professional services include:

- State-supervised residential services
- Therapeutic services provided by licensed clinicians
- Professional nursing care
- Transportation for required medical/dental treatment
- Case management services
- Accredited secondary education services on campus (i.e. secure environment)

The 12 months of aggregate services provided to these girls comes to \$287,550 of which VDSS grant reimbursement is \$100,000 (35%) with YFT providing the remainder of \$187,550 (65%) under the current grant. State funding is important in supplementing the cost of financially serving this victimized population. Additional funding ensures more victims trying to recover from this type of violence will receive the safe, secure, therapeutic, medical and case management services they require.