



# Transitional Programs



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## I. INTRODUCTION

Sunnybrook has been nurturing the neglected youth of our state for more than six decades. Historically, we have ministered to children of a variety of ages who had been removed from their guardian's custody by Child Protection Services (CPS). Because of an increased need and because of changes in funding structures, Sunnybrook now works exclusively with transitional-age youth. Older youth exiting the foster care system or preparing to leave their parents care often struggle

to launch successfully. Our goal is to prepare youth for a life of sustainability after they leave their current care structure. Through intentional Educational, Professional, Personal and Financial development. Our Transitional program is specifically designed to prepare these young people for success as engaged Christian members of their communities. Through its programming, staffing, and facilities, Sunnybrook is specifically ministering to young people during these crucial years.

## PROGRAM MISSION

Receive transitional-age youth, initiate and strengthen their overall personal development while at Sunnybrook, and support them as they create and execute a personal plan toward their next step of independence.

## PROGRAM VISION

To see life-change that breaks generational cycles and has an eternal impact on the lives of Sunnybrook residents.

## II. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

### TRANSITIONAL LIVING PROGRAM

Sunnybrook serves transitional-age youth, between the ages of 14-21. A majority of these residents are in state custody, were previously adopted, or come from troubled backgrounds. Because the needs of residents vary drastically depending on their background, abilities, and personal goals Sunnybrook has two levels of programming. Transitional Living Program (TLP) residents are typically

14-18-year-olds who are in high school or working on a high school equivalency. They live with Houseparents who serve as their primary caregivers at Sunnybrook. The TLP program focuses on the extensive life skills development, financial readiness training, acquiring driver's license, and part-time employment.

### SUPERVISED INDEPENDENT LIVING

Supervised Independent Living (SIL) residents are typically 18-21 years of age and have completed high school, or high school equivalency. Participants reside with a Resident Assistant who provides supervision, support, and encouragement. The primary difference between the TLP and SIL resident is that they will begin working directly with the Sunnybrook administration team to manage their own personal care. The SIL programming builds on

the personal, professional, and educational development from the TLP, but places a greater emphasis on professional development and financial advancement. SIL residents are required to work fulltime, go to college (or trade school) fulltime, or a combination of both. Managing their personal affairs, maintaining a vehicle, and saving money for long-term goals are markers of a SIL resident's success as they approach transitioning away from Sunnybrook.

## III. ELIGIBILITY AND REFERRALS

Before entering the program, potential placements are screened for their eligibility and desire to engage with programming.

### ELIGIBILITY

- Ages 14-18 (TLP) and 18-21 (SIL)
- Possess an active desire to finish education (GED/HS Diploma), start post-secondary education, or career training
- Possess an active desire to find gainful employment and begin working toward a preferred vocational or career path
- Possess an active desire to develop oneself personally and professionally
- Agrees to comply with the program's Placement Agreement while at Sunnybrook

### PROGRAM COMPONENTS

- **Living in Community** – Residents will live in a stable community alongside other residents under the care of Houseparents.
- **Personal Development** – Residents will participate in a variety of sessions that are focused on their mental, emotional, financial and spiritual frameworks, so that they better understand who they are and how to make the best decisions for themselves.
- **Professional Development** – Residents will complete the Work Life curriculum and obtain either full or part-time employment.
- **Educational Advancement** – Residents will pursue completing their GED/HS Diploma, or furthering their education with post-secondary school or career training.
- **Financial Advancement** – Residents will take part in several financial courses and workshops in addition to learning to manage their own finances while participating in Sunnybrook's savings program.
- **Case Management & Counseling** – Residents will participate in their own case management by attending scheduled appointments, regular counseling sessions, and family team meetings.
- **Independent Living Skills Training** – Residents will learn skills in both living independently in a home and also how to live interdependently and caring for others.
- **Personal Care** – Residents will be guided in learning how to care for themselves through their Case Management, Personal Development Sessions and Living in Community; they will learn how to adequately meet their personal needs at a fundamental level.

Currently, we receive referrals from three primary sources: Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services, state-wide Mississippi nonprofits, and national nonprofits serving unique teenagers within the foster care system. All referrals are put through a process that screens for potential success at multiple levels. Once a referral's paperwork confirms that they are an eligible candidate for the program, an interview is conducted. Candidates are scored based on six distinct metrics: Behavioral/Placement History, Medical Status, Developmental History, Education Status, Professional History, and Individual Motivation/Willingness to Work. Determinations are made based on their scoring and the capabilities of Sunnybrook to help meet the resident's needs for successfully achieving goals.



## IV. RESIDENT DEVELOPMENT

Appropriate referrals result in the intake of new residents and the beginning of their development journey. Sunnybrook's Transitional Programs are based on the understanding that a resident's best chance of success depends on their development in 4 key areas:

- PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT
- EDUCATIONAL ADVANCEMENT
- PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
- FINANCIAL ADVANCEMENT

These pillars each act in concert to improve long-term outcomes. A young person may have a certificate in welding needed to gain employment, but if they do not have the personal discipline to arrive at work on time or possess the skills to communicate effectively with their boss, they will not be able to retain that employment. Likewise, a resident may have a steady paycheck, but if they do not know how to manage their finances, they may end up losing their housing, resulting in a cascade of negative consequences. These 4 pillars will be arranged in a unique order depending upon the

resident's circumstances, maturity level, and desired outcomes. Immediate, critical markers within each category will then expand to long-term, ideal outcomes. Schedules are made for residents where opportunities for supporting their community, learning new skills, and creative experiences take place. Our homes have custom schedules and calendars that meet the individual needs and goals of their residents. Within the houses, every resident has different stops along their weekly journeys with regards to their emotional, educational, personal, spiritual, physical, medical, and professional needs.

## V. SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS AWAY FROM SUNNYBROOK

**"Success" will look different depending on each resident's circumstances and goals.**

In general, success includes obtaining a driver's license, completion of the *Work Life* and *Faith and Finance* curriculums, reliable transportation, stable employment or a full-time education plan, predictable housing, and financial stability that includes budgeting and savings. Prior to a resident successfully transitioning away from Sunnybrook, they will complete a comprehensive transition plan that is unique to their journey ahead. Our immediate marker for success is that a resident

leaves Sunnybrook and their next step is an opportunity for success, not them taking a chance or proceeding without attainable goals. A medium-range marker for success is that a resident is experiencing growing levels of independence at the place they transitioned to from Sunnybrook. Long-range markers of success are that they complete the goals they left here to pursue, and that they and their families break the cycle of neglect and abuse that they have experienced.

**"You guys are amazing, the care that you provide and your mission is truly incredible. We are blessed to have had a chance to see you guys in action. Sunnybrook is an outstanding program, with a very special and Godly staff. Thank you all again from the bottom of our hearts!"**

Wayne and Melissa  
Adoptive parents of a Sunnybrook resident



**Sunnybrook Transitional Living Program**

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