**Proposed *Priority* Recommendations**

1. **Prevent exits to homelessness from public systems**

*Strategies & Activities:*

* 1. Establish an **interagency workgroup** with representatives from agencies such as Children’s Administration, Juvenile Rehabilitative Administration, OSPI, Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery Services, etc. The work group would establish a set of shared goals and accountability across state government to prevent and end youth homelessness.
  2. Implement a **risk assessment and referral process** for youth in public systems of care. For youth under the care of another public system, institute a standardized assessment tool to identify youth at risk of homelessness and a streamlined process to connect them to services.
  3. Require **transition plans** for youth under the care of public systems that include definitive stable housing (i.e., an actual address), an education/employment plan with meaningful steps for achieving goals, contacts for the youth for relatives and other individuals in the community who have been identified as adult resources for the youth, and a completed independence check-list (addressing issues such as a clean credit report, legal documents in-hand, including identification and birth certificate, and a bank account has been established).
  4. Expand options to enroll in **Extended Foster Care (EFC)**. Allow participants to opt-in to EFC any time up to age 21, to opt-in as many times as requested, and allow youth to qualify if they were formerly a state dependent but not a dependent at the time of enrollment.
  5. **Target outreach efforts** to identify system-involved youth who are at risk of homelessness and formalize connections between youth service providers and public systems.

1. **Develop and implement a crisis intervention and prevention strategy**

*Strategies & Activities:*

* 1. Provide **crisis intervention services** to families in conflict. Establish a **crisis hotline** for families in conflict to address underlying issues and keep youth off the streets. Cocoon House’s Project Safe is a best practice model that provides phone consultations, educational tools and a support group for parents. Utilize **Crisis Residential Centers** to serve families who need respite and support to reconcile.
  2. Improve and expand **family reconciliation services** [*YAEH recommendation*]***.*** Conduct an evaluation of the availability, accessibility, and effectiveness of the Family Reconciliation Services program to ensure we are providing adequate services to families in crisis.

Examine other models of family reconciliation and methods of delivering services, such as building the capacity of youth service providers to contract or have on staff a licensed family therapist so that services are more directly available. Reconciliation services should include a mental health evaluation as part of the assessment of needs, and be proficient in helping LGBTQ youth reconcile with family.

* 1. Develop a **diversion intervention** to prevent youth from entering juvenile detention for status offenses [*YAEH recommendation*].
  2. **Examine licensing standards** to assess whether current requirements for shelters are appropriate and accessible by youth they are intended to serve.

1. **Improve educational outcomes for students experiencing homelessness**

*Strategies & Activities:*

* 1. Designate a trained **point person in every school** that can build relationships with young people, help identify homeless students, connect them with services, and create individualized support plans for their educational success [*YAEH recommendation*].
  2. Expand housing options available through the **Homeless Student Stability Program** (HSSP) to connect unaccompanied youth with housing (host homes for example).

1. **Ensure equitable access to services regardless of a young person’s race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or geographic location**

*Strategies & Activities:*

* 1. **Expand services** to **all counties of the state** so that youth do not have to leave their own community to seek services. Develop and support a shelter and crisis intervention model for rural communities who don’t have the capacity to obtain and staff a facility. Host homes are a promising model for these communities.
  2. Provide **technical assistance** to smaller communities to equip them with the skills and resources needed to effectively serve homeless youth in their community.
  3. Adopt and implement a set of protocols and best practices for **serving youth of color and LGBTQ youth**. The Center for Children and Youth Justice is developing protocols to guide youth-serving professionals to better identify, engage, and serve LGBTQ youth. The Northwest Youth Network is conducting an assessment on the needs of youth of color to understand how best to serve the population.

1. **Improve data quality**

*Strategies & Activities:*

1. Allow minors to provide **written consent** to share their information in HMIS
2. Improve integration of **county detention data** to increase understanding of the prevalence of youth discharged into homelessness, including those who go from detention to temporary beds at CRCs and/or homeless youth shelters. If data integration is not possible, require reporting on each county’s release of youth from detention to shelter or unknown destinations