**OFFICE OF HOMELESS YOUTH**

**STRATEGIC PLAN FRAMEWORK**

**VISION:** *Every family and youth in Washington State has the individualized support they need so that no young person has to spend a single night without a safe and stable home. Every community has services that are equitable, accessible, effective, responsive, and coordinated.*

Terminology:

*YYA= Youth and Young Adults*

*Homeless= without family support and living in shelters, on the streets, in cars or vacant buildings, or who are “coach surfing” or living in other unstable circumstances*

Report citations:

Noble: Noble, Courtney. *Youth Homelessness Landscape in Washington,* June 2016. This report will be distributed to the Advisory Committee the week of July 4th

NN4Y: National Network for Youth. *What Works to End Youth Homelessness?* 2015 <https://www.nn4youth.org/wp-content/uploads/2015-What-Works-to-End-Youth-Homlessness.pdf>

MN: *Heading Home, Minnesota’s Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness, 2016-2017* <http://www.headinghomeminnesota.org/sites/default/files/MHFA_FULL.pdf>

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Which of the proposed strategies are **most important** to you? | What strategies are **missing** that you think are important for consideration? | **STRATEGIES/ PRECONDITION NEEDED TO ACHIEVE RESULT** | **RESULTS** | **INDICATORS** |
|  |  | **STABLE HOUSING** | | |
|  |  | **Outreach:**  • Make outreach services available across the state to identify homeless YYA and provide connection to housing and services  • Target outreach efforts to youth in schools, juvenile justice facilities, safe place sites, rural areas and to subpopulations such as trafficked youth, LGBTQ youth, youth of color, and pregnant or parenting youth  • Expand the age eligibility for Street Youth Services outreach to serve ages 18-24  **Emergency shelter and crisis intervention:**  • Ensure there is a shelter or emergency housing option available in every county in the state that is developmentally appropriate and specifically for homeless YYA  • Develop and fund a YYA emergency housing model for rural communities (for example, Host Homes)  • Increase the capacity of HOPE and CRC programs by increasing the payment rate  • Promote low barrier shelter practices that make services more accessible to the hardest to reach YYA  **Longer-term supportive housing:**  • Increase availability of transitional housing for YYA  • Expand rental assistance programs for young adults  • Establish a provisional discharge option for youth who choose to leave the child welfare system that preserves their eligibility for extended foster care (MN)  • Expand eligibility requirements (and funding streams ) for beds and services currently limited to foster youth (such as IYHP, RLSP, Independent Living, Extended Foster Care) to serve a broader population of youth experiencing homelessness. (Noble)  • Prohibit discrimination against renters based on their source of income or youth status  **Subpopulations:**  • Expand availability of developmentally-appropriate housing for homeless youth who are parenting (Noble)  • Designate housing for youth who are victims of commercial sexual exploitation  • Designate housing for LGBTQ youth  • Increase placement options for youth in foster care  • Ensure that shelter and housing providers are following state and federal statues related to anti-discrimination  **Licensing:**  Assess whether current licensing requirements and standards used for shelters, host homes, and extended foster care placements are appropriate and overseen by the appropriate body (Noble) | *HOMELESS YOUTH & YOUNG ADULTS HAVE A SAFE & STABLE PLACE TO SLEEP EACH NIGHT UNTIL PERMANENCY CAN BE REACHED.* | • Number of unsheltered homeless YYA (Basic Food report)  • Exits to permanent/transitional housing (HUD system performance measures & HMIS)  • Returns to homelessness (HUD system performance measures)  • Wait times for placement/housing (Coordinated Entry)  • Length of time YYA are homeless (HMIS) |
|  |  | **Transition planning:**  • Implement an assessment tool that identifies youth at risk of homelessness for youth involved in state systems  • Require transition plans for youth in juvenile justice, child welfare, and behavioral health placements; The plans should 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). Transition planning should be initiated in the first 20 days of entry into a system; for shorter-term placements, transition planning should begin on the first day of placement.  **Child welfare exits:**  • Require that courts not dismiss a dependency without a transition plan that identifies definitive stable housing (CLS)  • Develop a program for referring youth exiting foster care into Commerce housing programs, so that youth can transition to housing directly from leaving care  • Allow participants to opt-in to extended foster care any time up to age 21 (Noble)  **Juvenile Justice exits:**  Formalize relationships between shelters and county detentions so youth without housing destinations are given a warm handoff to shelter staff. Encourage collaboration across systems through joint projects and blended grant funding (Noble)  **Behavioral Health exists:**  Formalize relationships between behavioral health organizations, mental health providers, treatment centers, hospitals, and homeless YYA providers to identify clients who are homelessness and make appropriate referrals to services, shelter and housing prior to release from care. | *NO YOUTH DISCHARGED FROM A PUBLIC SYSTEM OF CARE WILL BE DISCHARGED INTO HOMELESSNESS* | Number of youth discharged to the street from public systems |
|  |  | **FAMILY RECONCILIATION** | | |
|  |  | **Family support services:**  • Increase funding for Family Reconciliation Services and ensure that services utilize a strengths-based approach and are comprehensive to include assessment as well as direct access to counseling  • Build capacity of homeless youth providers to delivery family reconciliation services on-site  • Ensure every youth/ family accessing a HOPE or CRC is automatically provided with a FRS assessment and services  *•* Support families by assisting them in accessing and applying for other public benefits such as food stamps, TANF, disability, SSI, physical and behavioral health, or other benefits  • Increase funding and support services that are available to family/kin and other natural supports that would result in youth being able to remain housed with their family/kin/natural supports. (Noble)  • Make Crisis Residential Centers an available and publicized option for respite and support for families in conflict or crisis  • Make available a crisis hotline for YYA and families to call to get immediate assistance and crisis intervention | *HOMELESS YOUTH ARE REUNIFIED WITH FAMILY WHEN SAFE AND APPROPRIATE* | Number of youth reunited with family (HMIS) |
|  |  | **Child Welfare capacity:**  •Build authority and capacity of the child welfare system to assist older minors (age 15-17) who are homeless without parental care (MN)  • Strengthen the appeal process for eligible youth denied services through the child protective system (MN)  • Design and establish a response system to meet the specific needs of older minor youth who are homeless without parental support (MN)  • Modify neglect and abandonment standards to allow more youth to access dependency services  **Supportive housing:**  • Expand Responsible Living Skills Program (RLSP) for foster youth who have not been successful in other traditional state placements.  • Increase transitional living options for older adolescents age 16 and over who cannot return home due to safety issues and are deemed not appropriate for foster care. (RLSP could be a model) | *YOUTH WHO CANNOT RETURN HOME ARE PROVIDED SAFE, SUPPORTIVE, AND STABLE HOUSING* | • Response rate and outcome from DSHS for youth in shelter whose parents are unreachable or refuse to pick them up (HMIS—for HOPE and CRC only)  • Exits from shelter to safe and appropriate placement (HMIS) |
|  |  | **PERMANENT CONNECTIONS** | | |
|  |  | **Staffing stability:**  • Increase support for homeless youth line staff. High staff turnover rates can be disruptive for clients and detrimental to an organization’s ability to provide consistent quality interventions. By providing greater supervision and 24-7 access to crisis services, staff would likely last longer and do better (Noble)  • Assign a single, system-wide case manager to youth until permanency is reached  • Create formalized processes for direct care staff to provide feedback and make suggestions to agency leadership. Support must be institutionalized in a way that goes beyond “self-care” (Levy-Peck, Trauma Informed Homeless Services Training)  **Informal supports:**  • Promote contacts with extended family, family friends, and family of choice  • Encourage, coordinate, and provide financial support for pro-social activities (i.e. field trips, service learning opportunities, educational workshops, trainings, etc.).  • Conduct assessments with youth that identify core strengths, skills, hobbies, and interests, and then match youth up with community mentors/opportunities in those areas. Match youth with existing mentorship/ positive development organizations such as Big Brothers Big Sisters and the Boys and Girls Club. | *HOMELESS YOUTH HAVE HEALTHY, POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH ADULTS* | • Number of youth engaged in education and/or employment  • Number of YYA who have consistent case manager until stable housing/ independence is achieved  •Number of YYA who can identify an adult they have a positive, healthy relationship with |
|  |  | **EDUCATION** | | |
|  |  | **K-12:**  • Ensure all unaccompanied homeless students receive McKinney-Vento services that connect them to housing  • Require each district to have a full time, designated homeless liaison  • Expand the Homeless Student Stability Program and create a dedicated portion of funding and services to address unaccompanied homeless youth  • Provide and implement consistent expectations and accountability for the McKinney-Vento school liaisons across districts (MN)  • Explore ways to improve data-sharing for McKinney Vento liaisons across school districts, and to track housing status improvement for unaccompanied homeless students (Noble)  • Encourage adoption of trauma-informed discipline in high schools with elevated rates of homelessness and disproportionality (Noble)  • Require annual training of teachers and school administrators on identifying and referring homeless students  **Post-secondary education:**  • Require higher education institutions to submit a plan to the WA Student Achievement Council on how to promote and support the admission and educational success of students experiencing homelessness  • Work with higher education institutions to develop a process to identify homeless students registered at their postsecondary institution, connect them to existing resources and track outcomes (MN). (Utilize the “Unaccompanied Youth Toolkit for Financial Aid Administrators” by NAEHCY)  **Independent living skills**:  • Incorporate independent living skills into programs that serve youth and young adults  • Expand the Independent Living Program to homeless YYA | *HOMELESS STUDENTS SUCCEED ACADEMICALLY & HAVE THE SKILLS THEY NEED TO BECOME INDEPENDENT AND SELF-SUFFICIENT* | • High school graduation rates (OSPI)  • Academic testing scores (OSPI)  • Number of homeless students who receive housing supports through school (Commerce/ OSPI)  • Change in homelessness status of student cohorts compared to previous year  • Number of homeless youth with absenteeism, expulsions, suspensions, truancy (OSPI) |
|  |  | **EMPLOYMENT** | | |
|  |  | **Job training & obtainment**  • Expand YouthWorks and target a portion of funding to serve unaccompanied homeless youth. Through YouthWorks, the state’s 12 Workforce Development Councils implement programs that bring industry together with schools and youth service organizations to improve education and employment outcomes for young people with low-incomes.  • Provide opportunities for homeless YYA to enroll in programs that combine education and training, employment and job placement, and housing support (NN4Y)  • Increase the number of certified pre-apprentice training programs throughout Washington, and provide resources for these programs.(Noble)  • Formalize relationships and collaboration between youth service providers, schools, employers, and Workforce Development Councils to ensure YYA have access to education, training, and employment opportunities  **Job supports**  • Expand transportation resources for YYA, so they can job search and get back and forth to work.  • Increase collaboration between youth service providers, DOL, SSA, and DOH to help youth acquire legal documents required to establish eligibility to work in the United States. | *HOMELESS YOUNG ADULTS OBTAIN EMPLOYMENT* | • Number of homeless YYA employed (HMIS)  • Availability of work and training opportunities provided by employers  • Number of youth participating in job skills training (resume building, interview prep, etc)/ availability |
|  |  | **SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING** | | |
|  |  | **Behavioral health:**  • Increase the capacity of the behavioral health system to provide quick access to mental health and substance abuse treatment  •Build capacity of homeless youth providers to provide mental health services on-site (including during street outreach), either through mental-health professionals on-staff, or through enhanced partnerships with local behavioral health providers. (Noble)  • Support continued treatment and a supportive environment for youth exiting treatment facilities (Oxford housing)  • Scan chemical dependency residential facilities, waitlist lengths and transition plans for youth exiting these facilities. Determine barriers to creating a system of on-demand, developmentally appropriate detox treatment beds for youth.(Noble)  **Physical health:**  • Increase collaboration between homeless YYA providers and HCA in person assistors to help eligible youth sign up for health insurance, or train YYA providers to become in person assistors within their agencies.  • Help YYA identify and establish relationships with primary care providers that can address their healthcare needs | *HOMELESS YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS ARE HEALTHY PHYSICALLY, SOCIALLY, AND EMOTIONALLY* | • Number of youth covered by health insurance (HMIS)  • Physical and mental health status (HMIS)  • Wait times for access to mental health and substance abuse treatment  • Outcomes for homeless youth in Healthy Youth Survey |
|  |  | • Ensure mental health services for youth throughout the state are trauma-informed, strengths based, culturally competent and use a positive youth development framework (Noble)  • Build infrastructure to allow homeless and formerly homeless YYA to provide input and leadership in systems reform and service programming.  • Allow YYA to be the architects of their future by providing case management tools, such as an “Individual Development Plan” for YYA to identify their goals and for service providers to build a plan of support and services to help youth reach their goals. Use our priority areas as the framework (stable housing; family reconciliation; permanent connections; education & employment, social & emotional well-being)  • Designate in law two seats on the Office of Homeless Youth Advisory Committee for YYA who have experienced homelessness | *PROGRAMS FOR HOMELESS YOUTH IDENTIFY, ENCOURAGE, AND NURTURE EACH YOUTH’S STRENGTHS AND ABILITIES AND DEMONSTRATE A COMMITMENT TO YOUTH-CENTERED PROGRAMMING.* | • Number of providers trained in best practices of care (trauma informed care, positive youth development, harm reduction, strengths-based approaches, etc)  • Number of opportunities for YYA to participate in program planning and policy development  • Responses to a youth customer service survey (would need to be developed) |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Which of the proposed strategies are **most important** to you? | What strategies are **missing** that you think are important for consideration? | **CROSS-CUTTING PRIORITIES** |
|  |  | **Equitable Outcomes**  Homelessness disproportionately impacts youth of color and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth. To eliminate inequities, we need to:   * Disaggregate data by race/ethnicity/ sexual orientation to measure and evaluate equity in outcomes * Increase the cultural competency of state agencies and service providers in responding to homelessness * Adopt an equity impact tool to evaluate policy and fiscal proposals * Allocate designated funding for services and interventions targeted to LGBTQ youth and youth of color * Adopt a set of statewide minimum standards and provide training on service delivery and best practices for serving LGBTQ youth |
|  |  | **Quality data**  Improving data collection and quality is essential to the OHY’s ability to measure outcomes, understand causes and characteristics of youth homelessness, and identify gaps in services. To improve data quality we need to:   * Allow youth under the age of 18 to consent to share their personally identifying information in HMIS * Publish OSPI data on homeless students annually, rather than biannually * 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. (Noble) * Explore real-time data sharing options for youth involved in the juvenile justice, child welfare, and education systems to increase case coordination. This could include joint assessment and services planning for cross-over youth (Noble) |
|  |  | **Shared statewide goals and outcomes**  Achieving the vision that all youth and young adults have a safe, stable place to call home will require shared goals and accountability across state systems. To accomplish that we need to:   * Centralize the strategy and funding to end youth homelessness within the OHY and provide authority and funding to the OHY to grant resources to other public entities to prevent exits to homelessness * Adopt and measure the shared goal that no state system discharge youth into homelessness by including it in Results Washington * Establish a Governor’s Cabinet on Youth Homelessness to promote accountability, improve efficiency, and establish strategic collaboration in the effort to end youth homelessness across state government * Develop a dashboard to monitor progress against statewide cross-system benchmarks (Noble) * Adopt state legislation to house all youth and set a target date |