OFFICE OF HOMELESS YOUTH
PREVENTION & PROTECTION PROGRAMS
2016 REPORT

Department of Commerce

December 2016
Report to the Governor and Legislature
Brian Bonlender, Director

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The following organizations and individuals were involved in the report development. Involvement may include editing, document review, lending content expertise, providing input and feedback, and making recommendations. Additionally, this plan was informed by input received during listening sessions hosted by A Way Home Washington in communities across the state including Yakima, Pierce, Clark, and Snohomish counties.

A special thank you to First Lady Trudi Inslee, Co-Chair of A Way Home Washington, for her visionary leadership on addressing youth homelessness and her partnership in hosting the listening sessions.

ENDORSED *This report has been endorsed by the Office of Homeless Youth Advisory Committee, Youth Advocates Ending Homelessness, and the Washington Coalition for Homeless Youth Advocacy*[1]

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Letter from the Chair

As Chair of the advisory committee for the Office of Homeless Youth, I am incredibly thrilled to have been part of the effort to shape and guide the development of this report.

In Washington State, we have a strong and diverse movement of community leaders, funders, and advocates working together to solve youth homelessness. The Office of Homeless Youth Advisory Committee is part of that collective of voices. We encompass an array of backgrounds and perspectives, including that of legislators, educators, service providers, law enforcement, youth voice, and philanthropy. The committee has been engaged in reviewing and guiding the development of this report since our first convening.

This plan comes at a pivotal time. Partners at the national, state, and local level are more attentive to and focused than ever before on solving this issue. There is a collective recognition that we have a responsibility to care for our young people and afford them the best opportunities in life. We firmly believe that we can prevent and end youth homelessness.

Our state has positioned itself to be a leader in the nation on this issue. The state made a commitment to address youth homelessness through last year's *Homeless Youth Prevention and Protection Act* and the creation of the Office of Homeless Youth. Today, we have a roadmap to guide the office's work, direct the state's investments, and inform policy decisions so we can meet our collective goal.

We have endorsed this plan and feel confident that it provides both the prioritization and direction needed for taking immediate action, as well as the comprehensive strategies that are needed to inform efforts over the long-term. However, this plan is not self-executing, and it will take involvement from all sectors to be successful. We hope you will join us and the office in our mission to prevent and end youth homelessness.

Casey Trupin
Chair, Advisory Committee
Office of Homeless Youth

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Introduction

Homeless Youth. These two words do not belong together. And yet, at least 13,000 young people in Washington State are without a safe and stable place to call home. Many have run from dysfunctional and sometimes violent homes, been kicked out for their gender identity or sexual orientation, or separated from their family due to poverty, drug and alcohol addiction, or mental health issues. Yet they all have one thing in common – they are our future. They should grow up to be our next business owners, teachers, and leaders. They have immense potential but face significant barriers in realizing their dreams. We must give them the support they need to grow into healthy adulthood and live fulfilling lives.

Our state is at a pivotal moment in our efforts to prevent and end youth homelessness. The creation of a state Office of Homeless Youth Prevention and Protection Programs (Office of Homeless Youth or OHY) put us on the national map as leaders in this movement. Alongside the office are committed advocates, service providers, and philanthropists who have joined together as A Way Home Washington to raise awareness and support solutions to end youth homelessness.

This movement would be hollow without the involvement of young people themselves. That's why youth are at the center of this effort—not just as the object of our efforts, but as key contributors. Our work is stronger when it is informed by the experiences and ideas of young people who have experienced homelessness. They have a right to be involved in decisions that impact their own lives and those of their peers.

This report lays out the best collective thinking on ways the state can make the biggest difference in preventing and ending youth homelessness. There is no silver bullet to solving such a complex issue, but we can leverage what experience and research tell us to make the best decisions today. We must make progress without delay. And we must remain open to continually learning from our experience and adjusting accordingly. Our future depends on it.

TERMINOLOGY ***Box 1.***

Homeless Youth: Throughout this report, "homeless youth" is used to refer to the population age 12 through 24, who are living on their own without a parent or guardian, and are without a safe, stable living arrangement. Implementation of programs and strategies often requires segregation between age groups. When relevant, the distinction is made between "minor youth" (under 18) and "young adults" (18 through 24).

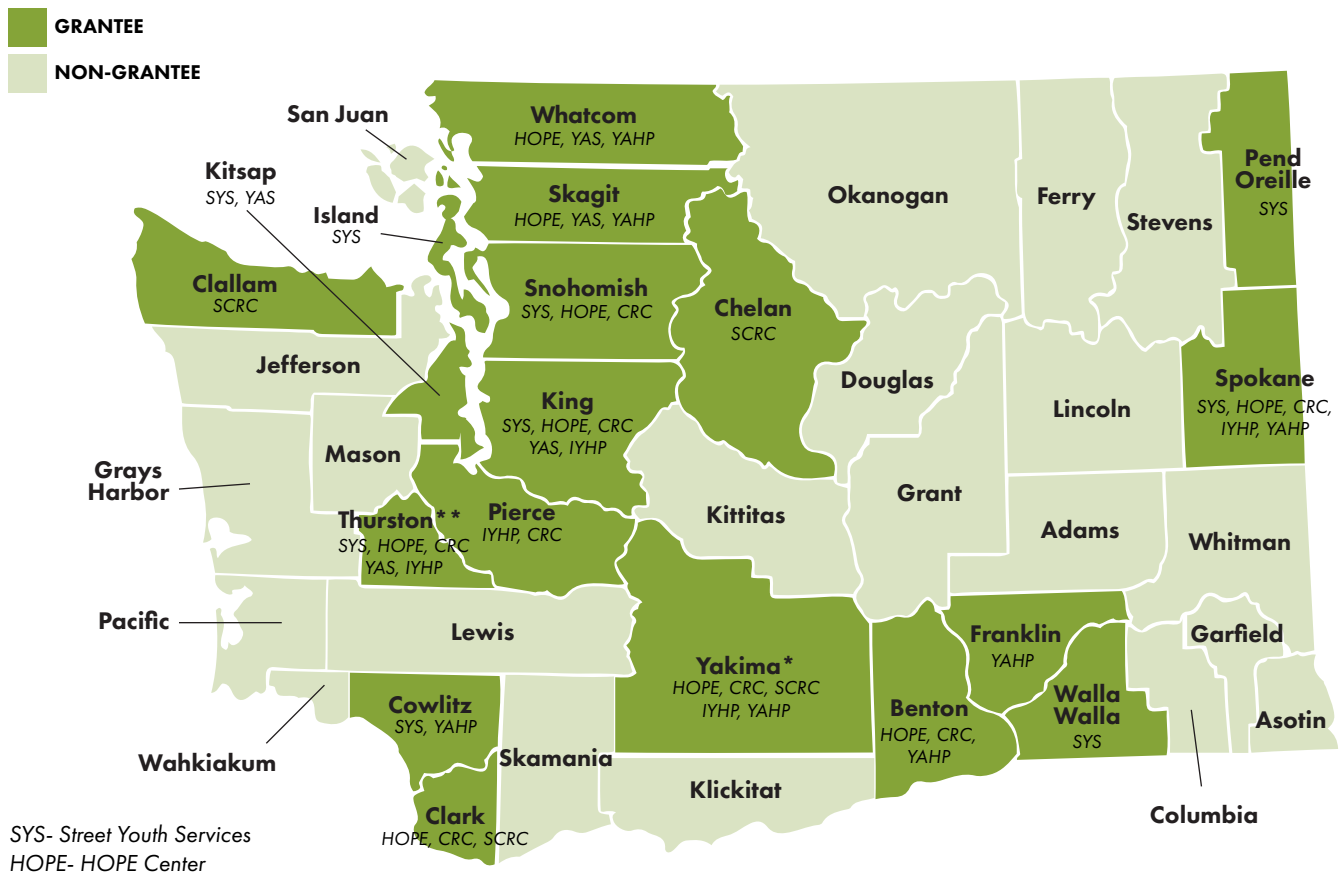
Homelessness: Consistent with the authorizing legislation (Second Substitute Senate Bill 5404), this plan assumes the definition of homelessness set forth in the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, as it pertains to the education of homeless children and youth. According to that definition, youth are homeless if they "lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence." This includes youth sleeping in emergency or transitional shelters, on the streets, in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, or other unsafe, unstable places. Also included are youth who are "couch-surfing" or "doubled-up." Couch surfing occurs when a youth finds temporary shelter with friends or other family members, but lacks a permanent or stable home. Doubled-up scenarios involve situations where a youth is sharing housing with others due to loss of housing. Couch-surfing is a doubled-up experience, as is any experience where a youth has no legal right to stay. (Federal definitions of homelessness are included in Appendix A)

Unaccompanied youth: Used interchangeably with "homeless youth," "unaccompanied" means a youth or young adult experiencing homelessness while not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

INTRODUCTION

OHY GRANTEES BY LOCATION, 2016

Map 1.



SYS- Street Youth Services
HOPE- HOPE Center
CRC- Crisis Residential Center
SCRC- Secure Crisis Residential Center
YAS- Young Adult Shelter
YAHP- Young Adult Housing Program
IYHP- Independent Youth Housing Program

* IYHP and YAHP serve youth in Benton, Franklin, Walla Walla, and Kittitas
** Some services available to youth in Lewis and Mason

BACKGROUND

Created in 2015 through the Homeless Youth Prevention and Protection Act (Second Substitute Senate Bill 5404[1]), the Office of Homeless Youth leads statewide efforts to reduce and prevent homelessness for youth and young adults.

The measurable goals of the office are to 1) decrease the number of homeless youth and young adults by identifying programs that address the initial causes of homelessness, and 2) measurably increase permanency rates among homeless youth by decreasing the length and occurrences of youth homelessness caused by a youth's separation from family or a legal guardian.

[1] http://app.leg.wa.gov/billinfo/summary.aspx?bill=5404&year=2015

Introduction

To measure progress towards its goals, the Office of Homeless Youth gathers data through the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). This data is used to track information on the characteristics of homeless youth and evaluate program effectiveness. This year (State Fiscal Year 2017), the Office of Homeless Youth is responsible for managing $11 million to support emergency housing and crisis intervention services, outreach to identify homeless youth and connect them to services, and assistance to young adults age 18 through 24 in communities throughout Washington (see map 1). Program descriptions are provided in box 2.

The funding and administration of programs that serve homeless youth have evolved since the creation of the Office of Homeless Youth:

- ***Independent Youth Housing Program.*** *Since it began in 2007, the state Independent Youth Housing Program (IYHP) has been administered by the Department of Commerce. This program seamlessly moved under the oversight of the office. It is funded at $1.8 million per biennium.*
- ***Transfer of HOPE Centers, Crisis Residential Centers (CRCs), and Street Youth Services.*** *The Homeless Youth Act transferred management responsibilities and approximately $12 million per biennium in funding for HOPE Centers, CRCs, and Street Youth Services from Children's Administration to the Office of Homeless Youth. Transfer of program management was achieved through a phased-in approach that began with joint oversight by both the OHY and Children's Administration for a six-month period. The OHY took on full oversight of these programs on July 1, 2016.*
- ***Increased funding in 2016.*** *A few months after the launch of the office, the Legislature increased funding by $3.7 million in the 2016 Supplemental Budget. The increase expanded Street Youth Services, HOPE beds, and CRCs, and funded new shelter and housing programs for 18 to 24 year olds (Young Adult Shelter and Young Adult Housing Program).*

Details on the OHY budget and programs can be found in Appendix B.

OFFICE OF HOMELESS YOUTH PROGRAMS & SERVICES ***Box 2.***

Crisis Residential Centers provide temporary residence, assessment, referrals, and permanency planning services in semi-secure and secure facilities for youth ages 12 through 17 who are in conflict with their family, have run away from home, or whose health and safety is at risk.

HOPE Centers provide temporary residence, assessment, referrals, and permanency planning services for street youth under the age of 18.

Street Youth Services focus on identification and engagement with homless youth under the age of 18. Programs provide needed services directly or link the youth to appropriate community resources. Services can include drug/alcohol abuse intervention, counseling, emergency housing, prevention and education activities, employment skill building, advocacy, family-focused services, and follow-up support.

Young Adult Shelters provides emergency temporary shelter, assessment, referrals, and permanency planning services for young adults ages 18 through 24.

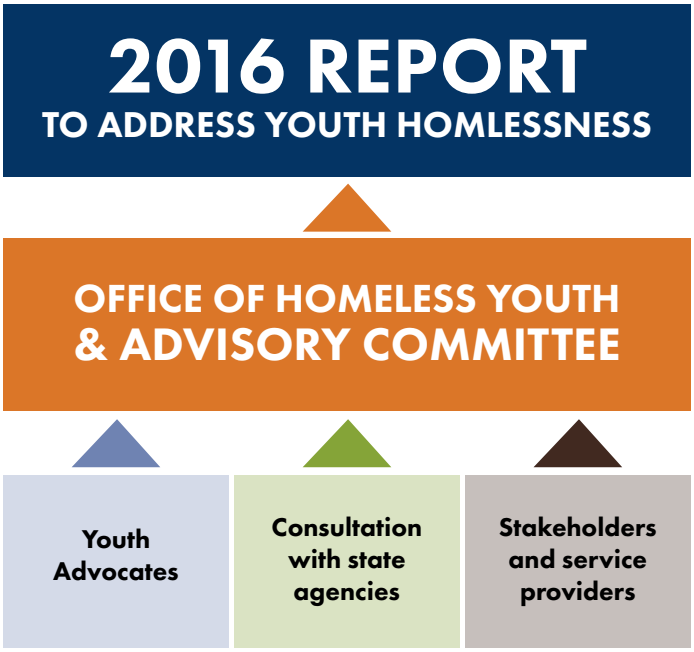
Young Adult Housing Program provides resources for rent assistance, transitional housing, and case management for young adults ages 18 through 24.

Independent Youth Housing Program provides rental assistance and case management for young adults between 18 and 23 years old who have aged out of the state foster care system.

How this plan was developed

RCW 43.330.706 instructs the Office of Homeless Youth to report to the Governor and Legislature by December 1, 2016 on recommendations for funding, policy, and practice solutions across five priority areas: stable housing, family reconciliation, permanent connections, education and employment, and social and emotional well-being.

This report was developed through a collaborative process that engaged multiple stakeholders, including the Office of Homeless Youth advisory committee, youth advocates who have experienced homelessness, a coalition of statewide youth service providers and advocates, and involved consultation with representatives from state agencies.



Advisory committee

The advisory committee is comprised of a diverse set of leaders who bring valuable expertise to guide the efforts of the office. Advisory committee members include legislators, educators, philanthropists, service providers, law enforcement, a young person who has experienced homelessness, and others (see full committee membership in Acknowledgments section).

Six public meetings were convened by the committee during 2016, the primary focus of which was shaping the content of the report. The committee formulated a shared vision and set of guiding principles, and contributed its expertise to define outcomes and develop the recommendations. It also reviewed recommendations from other stakeholders and provided guidance on identifying priorities.

Youth voice

It is a core value of the Office of Homeless Youth to engage young people who have experienced homelessness. We believe we will be most effective in our efforts if young people's ideas and voices are involved.

The Mockingbird Society's Youth Advocates Ending Homelessness (YAEH) gives young people who have experienced homelessness a chance to speak up, tell their stories, and advocate for programs and services they think will improve the lives of young people who do not have a stable home. The Office of Homeless Youth meets quarterly with YAEH to engage young people as important advisors in its work.

On August 3, 2016, the OHY and its advisory committee participated in the Youth Leadership Summit to hear proposals directly from youth advocates. The Youth Leadership Summit is an annual event that is in its 11th year. The Youth Leadership Summit previously included presentations by the Mockingbird Youth Network (MYN) to the Washington Supreme Court Commission on Children in Foster Care. The MYN is a powerful statewide coalition of young people who have experienced the child welfare system first-hand and want to share their stories and ideas so tomorrow's foster youth will not have to face the same challenges.

This is the first year that YAEH and the Office of Homeless Youth have participated in this event, providing a valuable platform for young people to present their recommendations on ending youth homelessness and raise awareness of the intersections between experiences with foster care and homelessness. The recommen-

How this plan was developed

dations of the youth advocates are included throughout this report.

A summary of the 2016 Youth Leadership Summit advocacy proposals can be found in the Appendix D.

Washington Coalition for Homeless Youth Advocacy

The Washington Coalition for Homeless Youth Advocacy (WACHYA) is a partnership of over 40 organizations dedicated to improving the lives of youth and young adults experiencing homelessness. Together, the coalition speaks with one voice to elected leaders across the state, raising awareness for homeless youth issues and urging support for reforms.

In June of 2016, WACHYA convened its members to begin identifying recommendations in order to set priorities to address youth homelessness. The coalition utilized the same framework as this report to align their conversations with the OHY planning process. Issues elevated by WACHYA are included in this report.

Washington state agencies

During the course of the plan development, the OHY met informally with staff from other state agencies to receive input on recommendations. Agencies that were engaged include the Employment Security Department, and the Department of Social and Health Services' Children's Administration and Juvenile Rehabilitative Administration. While these interactions provided valuable input, a formal and thorough process to include state agencies in the development of this report was not conducted. Addition ally, relevant state agencies other than those listed above were not involved.

The recommendations in this report provide an important roadmap and starting point for further action and development. Relevant state departments and agencies should be engaged as partners in refining or advancing strategies.

One recommendation is the establishment of an interagency workgroup focused on creating a shared agenda to prevent and end youth homelessness. A platform of this kind would foster much-needed system-wide participation.

A way home washington

Co-Chaired by a young person who has experienced homelessness and First Lady Trudi Inslee, A Way Home Washington [2] is a movement that brings together diverse voices from across the state to raise awareness and build partnerships to end youth homelessness.

To support the work of the Office of Homeless Youth and strengthen knowledge in the field, A Way Home Washington commissioned a comprehensive report, *Youth Homelessness in Washington, Landscape Scan* [3]. This resource played an important role in the development of the Office of Homeless Youth report and continues to shape the thinking of the OHY. The A Way Home Washington report offers up recommendations and spotlights model practices throughout the state. This OHY report draws heavily on the information in the A Way Home Washington report and is reflected throughout these pages.

A Way Home Washington also organized a series of listening sessions around the state to hear from community leaders, services providers, and young people on what is needed to prevent and end youth homelessness in their community. The office was a partner and co-convener of these sessions, and the community-level input was taken into consideration as this plan was developed.

[2] http://www.awayhomewa.org/

[3] http://www.awayhomewa.org/about/resources/

Scope of this plan

This plan initiates a strategic approach to prevent and end youth homelessness in Washington State. It defines the results the OHY is aiming for, the strategies to achieve them, and the outcome measures to tell us if it's working. The recommendations serve as a roadmap for the Governor, the Legislature, and other state leaders.

Housing is a fundamental component of stability for a young person, yet housing alone will not support the transition to a healthy, productive adulthood. A more holistic and coordinated approach is needed to provide young people with the educational, emotional, and safety supports to develop into healthy adulthood.

This plan outlines strategies across a broad framework to address youth homelessness. As prescribed by the Homeless Youth Prevention and Protection Act [4], it addresses the following five key components, which dovetail with the Federal Framework to End Youth Homelessness:[5]

1. ***Stable Housing -*** *Every youth has a safe and healthy place to sleep at night.*
2. ***Family Reconciliation -*** *Families are reunited when safe and appropriate.*
3. ***Permanent Connections -*** *Youth have opportunities to establish positive, healthy relationships with adults.*
4. ***Education and Employment -*** *Youth have opportunities to advance in their education or training and obtain employment.*
5. ***Social and Emotional Well-Being -*** *Youth have access to behavioral and physical health care; services nurture each youth's individual strengths and abilities.*

While the Office of Homeless Youth serves as the strategic director and system-level owner for addressing youth homelessness, this plan touches on the policy, practice, and funding changes needed from all corners of state government. Success in these efforts will require shared leadership and action from multiple public systems such as child welfare, juvenile justice, education, and behavioral health.

What does it mean to end youth homelessness?

This plan outlines the strategies necessary to ensure that no young person has to spend a single night without a safe and stable place to call home. Preventing homelessness is essential to this effort. Multiple strategies confront the risk factors and pathways that lead to homelessness; however, this plan does not propose to eradicate all of the underlying factors that may lead to homelessness, such as family conflict, poverty, or mental illness. Rather, the strategies are aimed at providing both interventions to families and youth who are at risk of experiencing homelessness as well as a response system for those currently experiencing homelessness. We anticipate the need for an ongoing community response system to intervene when family conflict occurs, when a youth runs away or is rejected from their home, or experiences any kind of housing instability.

[4] http://lawfilesext.leg.wa.gov/biennium/2015-16/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Laws/Senate/5404-S2.SL.pdf

[5] https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/USICH_Youth_Framework__FINAL_02_13_131.pdf

Causes & characteristics

Until recently, there have been few sources of information on the demographics and data regarding homeless youth in Washington State. A surge in commitment to understanding and solving youth homelessness has brought about new research and data. Supported by the Raikes Foundation, A Way Home Washington commissioned a report to help better understand what we know about the issue of youth homelessness in Washington. The report outlines current capacity, as well as assets and gaps in policy, program, and practices. Unless otherwise noted, Washington State-specific data in this section is derived from that report, *Youth Homelessness in Washington, Landscape Scan*,[6] prepared for A Way Home Washington and the Office of Homeless Youth.

There are homeless youth in every community in Washington

Homelessness is a problem facing young people across the state. Nearly 13,000 youth under age 25 experience homelessness on their own over the course of a year, enough to fill 185 school buses. Nearly 6,000 unaccompanied youth in our public K-12 schools experience homelessness. And on a given night, more than 1,300 young people can be found sleeping on the streets, in shelters, or in other unstable situations.[7]

HOMELESS OVER THE COURSE OF A YEAR

12,889

UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS YOUTH IN SCHOOLS

5,788

HOMELESS ON A SINGLE NIGHT

1,309

Many more youth experience homelessness but go unaccounted for because they hide their homelessness or never access a public system.

These young people can be found in every area of the state (see map 2). While the majority reside in more populated areas of the state – King, Pierce, Snohomish, Clark, Spokane, Yakima, and Thurston counties — youth in smaller communities may be at greater risk. Benton-Franklin, Okanogan, Skagit, and Clallam counties have higher rates of high school disengagement, adolescent pregnancy, and juvenile arrests – risk factors associated with homelessness.

[6] http://www.awayhomewa.org/about/resources/

[7] Data from HMIS (2013-2014); student data from analysis of OSPI data conducted by Columbia Legal Services (SY 2014-15); Point-In-Time count (2016).). The PIT count is of households, including both unaccompanied and parenting youth. Young people may appear in multiple data sources

CAUSES & CHARACTERISTICS

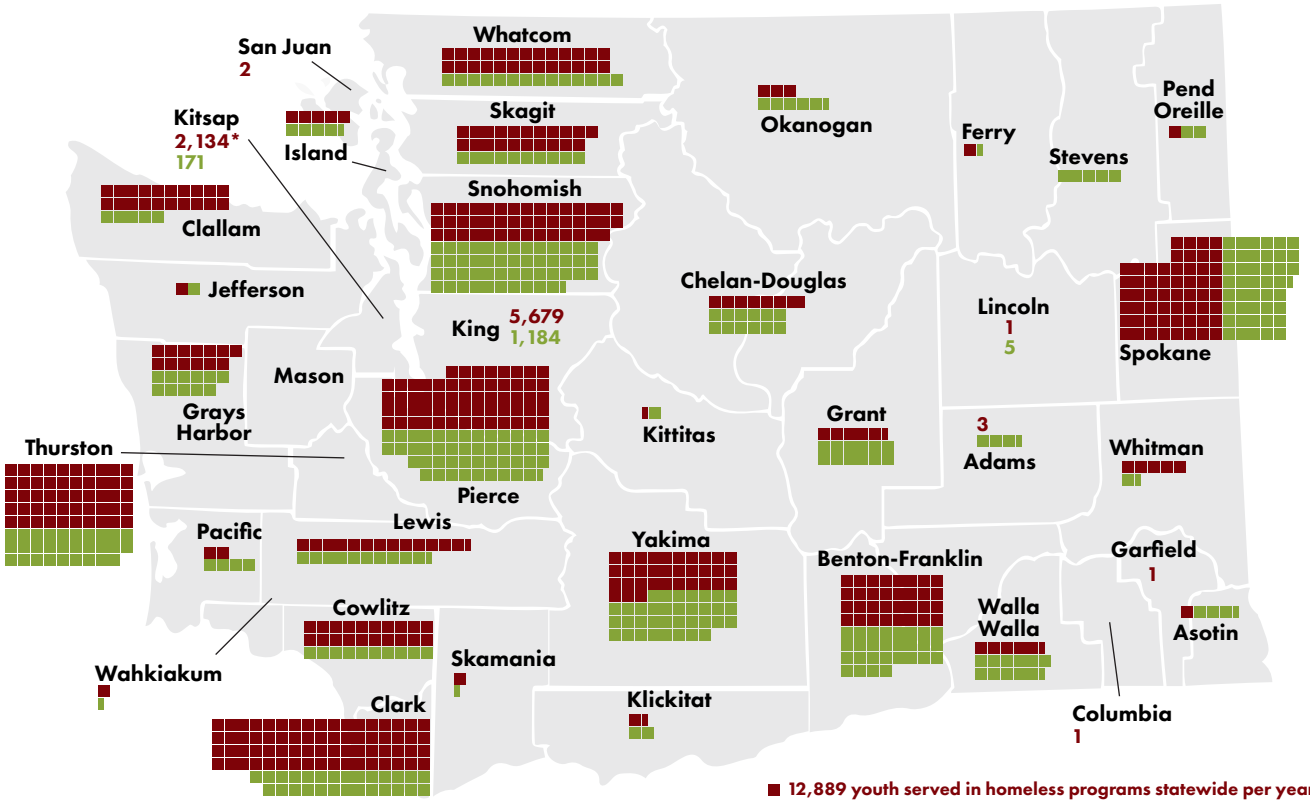
PREVALENCE OF HOMELESS YOUTH

Map 2.

YOUTH EXPERIENCE HOMELESSNESS IN EVERY COUNTY IN WASHINGTON STATE

YOUTH RECEIVING HOMELESS SERVICES OR HOUSING (one square represents 10 youth)
87% are ages 18-24

UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS STUDENTS (one square represents 10 youth)
77% are under 18



12,889 youth served in homeless programs statewide per year
5,788 unaccompanied homeless students per year
youth may appear in both data sources

HMIS data Fiscal Year 2014
OSPI data school year 2014-2015; estimates from non-reporting school districts prepared by Columbia Legal Services.
*Kitsap County's number may be elevated due to how clients were entered into coordinated entry

SOURCE: Noble, Courtney (2016).Youth Homelessness in Washington, Landscape Scan. Prepared for A Way Home Washington and the Washington State Office of Homeless Youth Prevention and Protection.

FAMILY CONFLICT IS A MAJOR DRIVER OF YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

Contrary to stereotypes, most young people do not choose homelessness but are forced into it because home is not a safe place to be. Family dysfunction, rejection, and conflict are common experiences that drive youth from their home before they reach adulthood. This can include abuse, neglect, a parent's drug or alcohol abuse or mental health issues, domestic violence, as well as rejection due to sexual orientation or gender identity. Ninety percent of youth accessing shelter claim that they experienced conflict at home.[8]

[8] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2013). Report to Congress on the Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs Fiscal Years 2010 and 2011. https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/fysb/rhy_congress_2010_11.pdf

Causes & characteristics

Youth of color & those that identify as LGBTQ are at greater risk of homelessness

Youth of color experience homelessness at much higher rates than the rest of the youth population. In Washington, black youth make up 24 percent of youth accessing housing services, yet only make up 6 percent of the state's population. They are three times more likely to experience homelessness than their peers.

In rural areas, American Indian youth are over-represented among homeless youth. In Yakima County, American Indian youth represent 10 percent of youth accessing services, but only five percent of the population.

While we lack adequate state-level data on homelessness among lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth (LGBTQ), national research indicates that up to 40 percent of all homeless youth identifies as LGBTQ.[9] This figure is especially startling given that 3 to 5 percent of the United States population identifies as LGBTQ.

The data highlight a need to address root causes of homelessness for youth at greater risk, as well as the need to target interventions and provide services that are accessible and responsive to the unique needs of youth marginalized due to their race, ethnicity, gender, or sexuality.

Many youth experience homelessness after exiting a public system

There is a strong intersection between youth who experience homelessness and those who have had some form of institutional placement – in foster care, the juvenile justice system, or a substance abuse or mental health treatment facility.

In a national study, 51 percent of homeless youth between the ages of 14 and 21 reported involvement in foster care.[10] Once youth are no longer eligible for foster care upon aging out, they often struggle to maintain stability due to a lack job experience, financial support, and the skills to live independently. Of youth who aged out of foster care at age 18 in SFY 2011 or 2012, approximately 1 in 4 experienced homelessness.[11]

[9] Ray, N. (2006). Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth: An epidemic of homelessness. New York: National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute and the National Coalition for the Homeless. http://www.thetaskforce.org/static_html/downloads/reports/reports/HomelessYouth.pdf

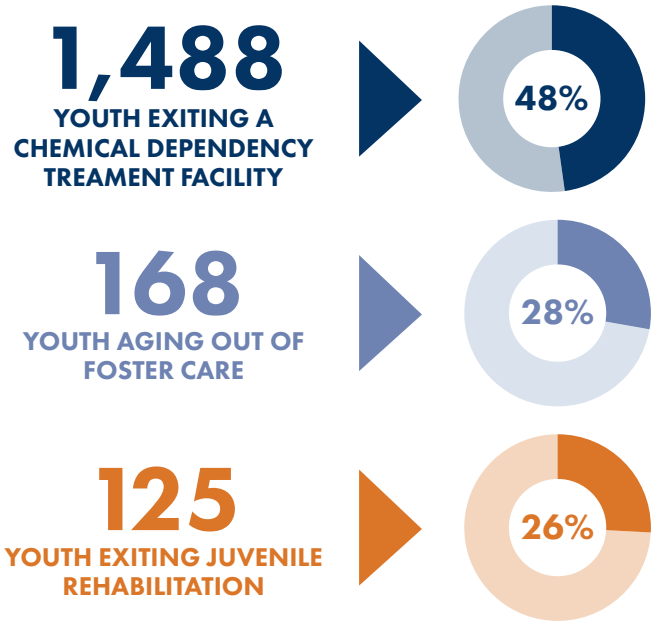
[10] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2014). Street Outreach Program: Data Collection Project Executive Summary. http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/fysb/fysb_sop_summary_final.pdf

[11] Shah, Melissa, et al. (2015). Youth at Risk of Homelessness (DSHS Research and Data Analysis Report 7.106) Among the 1,213 youth in the study who aged out of foster care, 335 experienced homelessness (broadly defined) at some point over the next 12 months. The study period is prior to full implementation of Extended Foster Care. https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sites/default/files/SESA/rda/documents/research-7-106.pdf

Causes & characteristics

Exiting a juvenile justice system is a vulnerable time that can pose an increased risk of homelessness for young people. Youth who have spent time in county detention or jail, a state institution, or a residential facility may find that upon release, they lack support from family, are inhibited from obtaining employment and housing due to criminal records, and don't have the financial support to live on their own. Twenty-six percent of youth who exited a state institution or residential facility in SFY 2010 or 2011 experienced homelessness.[12]

YOUTH EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS 12 MONTHS AFTER EXITING A PUBLIC SYSTEM



While we do not have statewide data on youth released from county juvenile detention centers, there is strong evidence to suggest that the number of youth exiting detention into homelessness is significant. In Pierce County in 2014, parents refused to pick up over 400 youth exiting detention and, for another 146, no parent could be located.[13]

Youth released from the juvenile justice system into homelessness have higher recidivism rates and are at greater risk of mental illness, substance abuse, or poor health status.[14]

Less is known about the circumstances of youth who experience homelessness after exiting chemical dependency treatment, but the data is alarming. Nearly half of the clients discharged from a residential chemical dependency treatment facility experienced homelessness within 12 months. In a study of individuals exiting institutions and out-of-home care, those leaving a chemical dependency treatment facility were more likely than any other group to experience homelessness.[15]

Economic instability contributes to youth homlessness

For some unaccompanied youth, the experience of homelessness began while they were with their family. A family's financial situation can put stable housing out of reach, resulting in homelessness. Lack of affordable housing, unemployment, and jobs that don't pay enough are just some of the barriers to housing faced by families. Youth may detach from their family to lessen the financial burden or become separated because many shelters do not allow older youth.

[12] Shah, Melissa, et al. (2013). Impact of Homelessness on Youth Recently Released from Juvenile Rehabilitation Facilities (DSHS Research and Data Analysis Report 11.191). Among the 962 individuals in the study population, 253 were found to have an indication of homelessness at some point in the 12-month follow-up period. https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sites/default/files/SESA/rda/documents/research-11-191.pdf

[13] Columbia Legal Services (2015). Falling Through the Gaps, How a Stay in Detention Can Lead to Youth Homelessness. http://www.columbialegal.org/sites/default/files/Detention_to_Homelessness_Web_0.pdf

[14] Ibid.

[15] Shah, Melissa, et al. (2013). The Housing Status of Individuals Leaving Institutions and Out-of-Home Care (RDA Report 11.200). https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sites/default/files/SESA/rda/documents/research-11-200.pdf

CAUSES & CHARACTERISTICS

RISKS FACTORS ARE WELL-DOCUMENTED

In addition to the causes and characteristics mentioned previously, research by the Department of Social and Health Services' Research and Data Analysis Division identified the factors that increase the chances a youth aging out of foster care will experience homelessness.[16]

FIVE FACTORS THAT MOST INCREASE THE RISK OF EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS ARE:

1. *Youth is a parent*
2. *Homeless or receiving housing assistance in prior year*
3. *Youth is African-American*
4. *Four or more congregate foster care placements*
5. *Four or more school moves in the prior three years*

In addition, a failed adoption is highly predictive of homelessness.[17] These important insights should be applied broadly to identify youth at risk of homelessness in other systems—schools, juvenile justice, and treatment facilities.

Given the research, we have ample information on the factors that can put a young person at risk of experiencing homelessness. This information can be used to develop assessment tools that identify youth with risk factors and target interventions to prevent youth from experiencing homelessness.

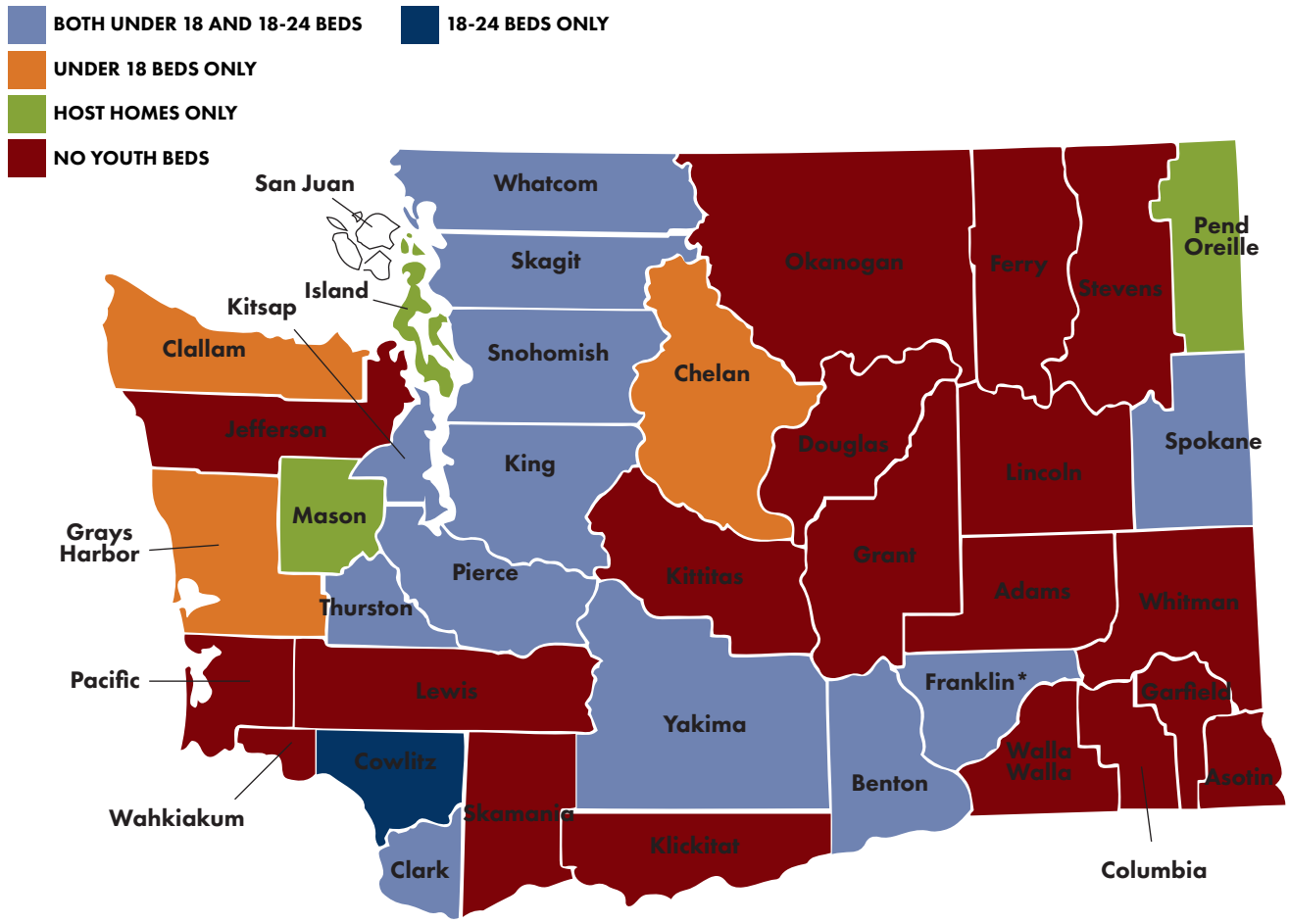
[16] Shah, Melissa, et al. (2015).Youth at Risk of Homelessness (RDA Report 7.106). https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sites/default/files/SESA/rda/documents/research-7-106.pdf

[17] Ibid. Those with a failed adoption were over three times as likely to experience homelessness; however, the prevalence is extremely low because it requires a reentry into foster care after the adoption. Advocates report that there are a meaningful number of youth whose adoptions fail but they do not reenter care.

GAPS

HOUSING STOCK

Map 3.



*data reflects Benton-Franklin counties combined.

SOURCE: Noble, Courtney (2016).Youth Homelessness in Washington, Landscape Scan. Prepared for A Way Home Washington and the Washington State Office of Homeless Youth Prevention and Protection; Includes OHY Grantees as of September 1, 2016.

Gaps

Shortage of shelters & housing for homeless youth

While there are homeless youth in all regions of the state, the resources to help them are not. There are no beds for homeless youth in half of the 39 counties in Washington (see map 3).

A significant number of homeless youth (over 10,000 or 87 percent of those in HMIS) are between the ages of 18 and 24, yet the state spends very little on housing tailored to this population. Forty-four percent of young adults are served in the adult homeless system.[18] However, the adult system is not equipped to meet the developmental needs of young adults who are transitioning into adulthood and often need a variety of supports.

In the 2016 supplemental budget, the Legislature provided $1.2 million to serve homeless young adults—the first time state dollars have been dedicated specifically to serving this population. Through this funding, young adults in eight communities will have access to housing support in the form of emergency shelter or rental assistance. This is a small but important start to meeting the need.

Rural communities are especially in need of resources. A challenge for these regions is finding the capacity to secure and maintain a facility and make it accessible to youth who are spread out over many miles. Host homes and other home-based housing stand out as potential models that may fit the needs of smaller communities and rural areas.

Gaps limit prevention & pathways out of homelessness for youth

There are common pathways into homelessness for youth and a variety of options that serve as pathways out of homelessness. We can prevent youth from ending up on a path into homelessness and we can more easily get them out, but in order to do so, we need to address significant gaps in our system (see table 1).

[18] Noble, Courtney (2016). Youth Homelessness in Washington, Landscape Scan. Prepared for A Way Home Washington and the Washington State Office of Homeless Youth Prevention and Protection. http://www.awayhome-wa.org/about/resources/

GAPS

GAPS LIMIT PREVENTION AND STABLE HOUSING FOR HOMELESS YOUTH

Table 1.

	PREVENTION		PATHWAYS INTO HOMLESSNESS	STABLE HOUSING		
	INTERVENTION	GAPS		INTERVENTION	GAPS	
SEPARATION FROM FAMILY	Crisis intervention, family counseling and reconciliation, respite, access to mental health services Assist families in accessing public benefits and obtaining stable housing	Absence of emergency shelter in many communities; lack of intervention services; schools unable to intervene early; lack of mental health and counseling services Lack of access to supports; lack of affordable housing	**FAMILY CONFLICT OR DYSFUNCTION** **FAMILY ECONOMIC INSTABILITY**	Youth returns home Youth goes to another home (including relative) with parental consent or by court order [1] Youth goes into foster care Youth is supported through homeless youth programs	Lack of family reconciliation services; reconciliation not always appropriate or possible Lack of information for parent to understand alternative placement options, advocacy to make it happen, support for the other home Youth not eligible for foster care, not enough placements, limited options for older adolescents Homeless youth programs not available consistently statewide; legal barriers to receiving support	UNDER 18 YEARS OLD
EXIT FROM PUBLIC SYSTEM OF CARE	Risk assessment & referral; transition planning from public systems of care Diversion from juvenile justice and child welfare	No systematic assessment & referral process or comprehensive transition planning; insufficient early warning and referral process in schools Limited alternatives to detention and supports to prevent removal of youth from home; punitive status offense laws	**EXIT FROM BEHAVIORAL HEALTH TREATMENT** **EXIT FROM CHILD WELFARE** **EXIT FROM JUVENILE JUSTICE**	Extended Foster Care Support provided by homeless young adult programs Independent living	Extended Foster Care not available to all youth; enrollment limitations prevent full access Lack of homeless young adult programs to support transition to independent living; lack of services to teach independent living skills	OVER 18 YEARS OLD

1. Court orders could include: non-parental custody order, change in parenting plan, protection order, or guardianship.

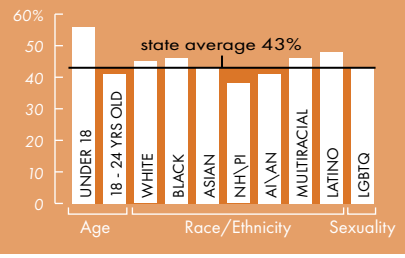
DATA DASHBOARD

In order to be effective in preventing and ending youth homelessness, we must know where things currently stand and be able to measure our progress along the way. This data dashboard provides systemwide benchmarks to tell us if our efforts are moving the needle in the right direction. These outcome measures will be updated on an annual basis and will help us be data-driven in our decisions and approaches. These data benchmarks correspond to data indicators by each goal area, found in the recommendation section of the report. In some instances, additional data indicators are under development or currently unavailable. See Appendix E for complete data profiles as well as a data dictionary.

OUTCOMES FOR YOUTH IN HOUSING PROGRAMS, DATA FROM 2015 AND 2016

STABLE HOUSING

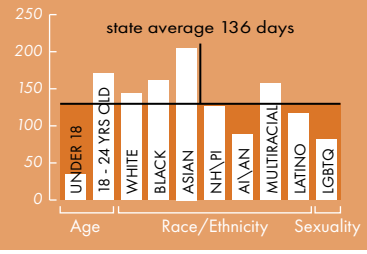
43% EXITED TO STABLE HOUSING



825 NEWLY HOMELESS STATEWIDE

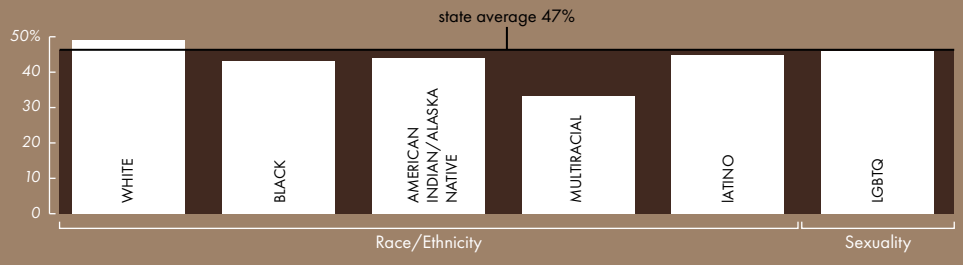
14% OF 18-24 YO RETURNED TO HOMELESSNESS*

136 DAYS IN PUBLIC HOUSING



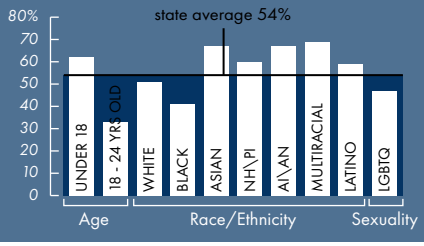
FAMILY RECONCILIATION

47% REUNITED WITH FAMILY, UNDER 18

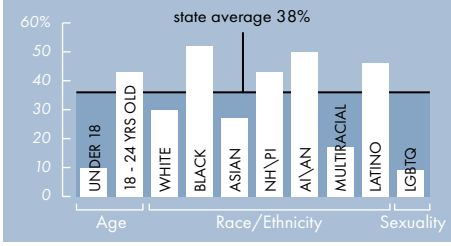


EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

54% ENROLLED & ATTENDING SCHOOL



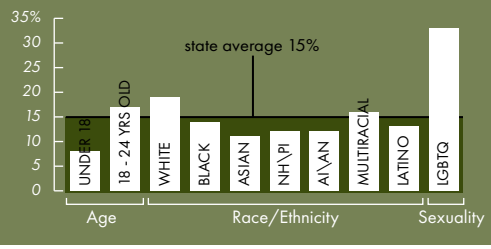
38% EMPLOYED AT PROGRAM EXIT



2% GAINED EMPLOYMENT DURING PROGRAM STAY

SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

15% REPORT A PHYSICAL DISABILITY OR HEALTH CONDITION



46% HAD HEALTH INSURANCE AT PROGRAM EXIT

5% GAINED HEALTH CARE DURING PROGRAM STAY

*Data for minors is not available due to absence of personally identifying data in HMIS.
For the purpose of this graphic the following have been abbreviated: American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN), Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (NH/PI).

VISION & PRINCIPLES

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.

PRINCIPLES

- *Advance approaches that are data-driven and evidence-based*
- *Identify and eliminate gaps in services and funding*
- *Involve youth voice*
- *Value experiences of youth and families*
- *Promote accountability in all policies and programs*
- *Be responsive to wherever a young person is at in their experience of homelessness*
- *Be locally-focused and support the ability of youth to remain in their community*
- *Recognize that not all parents reject their kids and that not all kids can return home safely*
- *Promote services that are youth-centered and individualized*
- *Be culturally responsive and reflect the needs of local communities*
- *Foster coordination between funding and systems*
- *Support an approach that is hopeful and believes in possibility*

RECOMMENDATIONS

This plan contains comprehensive information and recommendations to prevent and end youth homelessness. The recommendations are organized in the following way:

1. **NEAR-TERM ACTION AGENDA:** *Three areas of highest impact and immediate need that the state should undertake immediately. These recommendations are also contained throughout the Strategies by Goal section, where they are described in more detail.*

2. **CROSS-CUTTING APPROACHES:** *Six approaches that need to be part of any issue-specific strategy.*

3. **STRATEGIES BY GOAL:** *Sixteen strategies, organized by the five components the Legislature identified as necessary in order to reduce and prevent youth homelessness. For each of the goal areas, desired results have been identified, as well as the data indicators that will measure progress.*

LEGEND ***Box 3.***

Funding solution. Primary need is funding. Policies and practices are in place, but additional resources are needed to expand capacity.

Policy solution. A change in law is required.

Practice solution. Requires a change in the way services are delivered or the way agencies operate. Does not require a change in law.

Does not require a change in law, but **legislative directive** may be needed to ensure implementation.

▲ **Desired outcome is an increase in measure**

▼ **Desired outcome is a decrease in measure**

Funding Solution | Legislative Directive | Policy Solution | Practice Solution

RECOMMENDATIONS

NEAR TERM ACTION AGENDA

1. NEAR TERM ACTION: ENSURE THAT YOUTH EXITING PUBLIC SYSTEMS HAVE A SAFE, STABLE PLACE TO GO

Establish an interagency workgroup or Governor's cabinet on youth homelessness to establish a set of shared goals and accountability across state government to prevent and end youth homelessness.

Implement a risk assessment and referral process for youth in public systems of care.

Require comprehensive transition plans for youth under the care of public systems.

Expand options to enroll in Extended Foster Care.

Target outreach efforts to identify system-involved youth who are at risk of homelessness and formalize connections between youth service providers and public systems.

2. NEAR TERM ACTION: INVEST IN CRISIS INTERVENTION AND DIVERSION

Provide crisis intervention services to families in conflict. Establish a crisis hotline and support groups for families in conflict to address underlying issues and keep youth off the streets.

Utilize Crisis Residential Centers to serve families who need respite and support to reconcile.

Improve and expand family reconciliation services

Expand diversion interventions to prevent youth from entering juvenile detention for status offenses.

Reform status offense laws to reduce the number of youth detained for actions like violating curfew and running away.

3. NEAR TERM ACTION: LEVERAGE THE FEDERAL MCKINNEY-VENTO ACT TO IMPROVE EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES

Support schools to fully implement the federal Every Student Succeeds Act, and ensure accountability.

Designate a trained staff person in every K-12 public school building that can identify and support homeless students.

Fully implement the Homeless Student Stability Program to connect older youth and unaccompanied youth with services and housing

Improve high school graduation rates by awarding students with partial or full credit for courses completed at a prior school.

Adopt trauma-informed discipline in high schools with elevated rates of homelessness and disproportionality.

Funding Solution | Legislative Directive | Policy Solution | Practice Solution

RECOMMENDATIONS

Expand YouthWorks[19] to strengthen connections between schools, employers, service providers, and the workforce system to help more youth gain job experience.

CROSS-CUTTING APPROACHES

Cross-cutting strategies represent a set of core components to a successful community response system to prevent and end youth homelessness. Implementation of any recommendation within this report should consider these elements.

1. CROSS-CUTTING APPROACH: EQUITABLE OUTCOMES

Access to services and positive outcomes should not differ depending on a young person's race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, or geography. Any policy, funding, or practice change should be considered through an equity lens.

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 additional funding in programs that serve homeless youth to support services and interventions targeted to LGBTQ youth and youth of color.

Adopt and implement a set of protocols and best practices for serving youth of color and LGBTQ youth. Look to models currently being developed: 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.

Expand legal advocacy for youth who have been discriminated against.

Expand housing and services to all counties of the state so that youth do not have to leave their own community to get help. Develop a shelter and crisis intervention model for rural communities who don't have the capacity to obtain and staff a facility.

Provide technical assistance to smaller communities to equip them with the skills and resources needed to effectively serve homeless youth in their community.

2. CROSS-CUTTING APPROACH: SUSTAINABLE FUNDING

Recommendations contained throughout this report should be viewed as building upon the foundation of services and programs that currently exist. It's important to maintain existing levels of funding to achieve consistency and stability for youth who rely on these services.

Move OHY funding to Commerce's base budget, rather than as individual provisos with funding limited to specific programs. This achieves predictability and stability in funding year over year, and allows for flexibility in allocating funds to best meet emerging needs.

Increase funding for existing homeless youth programs to implement incentive payments for providers who exceed performance standards and providers who serve higher-needs youth

[19] http://wtb.wa.gov/YouthWorks.asp

Funding Solution | Legislative Directive | Policy Solution | Practice Solution

RECOMMENDATIONS

such as those who struggle with mental illness, substance abuse, or have criminal records

Remove the requirement that 45 percent of funding from the Home Security Fund be spent on rental or leasing payments to for-profit entities. The Home Security Fund is supported through revenue generated from the recording fee for certain real estate documents. Spending 45 percent of the funding on payments to for-profit entities is especially difficult to achieve for funding that serves homeless youth through emergency shelter and crisis intervention services.

Renew the document recording fee without adding a future sunset date. The document recording fee is the state's most significant funding tool to prevent and end homelessness.[20]

3. CROSS-CUTTING APPROACH: DATA QUALITY

Data collection and quality is essential to our ability to measure outcomes, understand causes and characteristics of youth homelessness, identify gaps in services, and target resources. Many of the recommendations contained in this report rely upon access to data through the following strategies.

Allow minors to provide written consent to share their personally identifying information in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Personally identifying information includes name, date of birth, and social security number. Written consent from a client is required to collect this information; however, minors are currently unable to provide their own consent. The absence of personally identifying information leads to duplication in the data and prevents both longitudinal data analysis as well as integration with other data systems. This limits the OHY's ability to accurately measure performance and track outcomes.[21]

Develop performance measures for homeless youth programs and incorporate into funding contracts.

Improve access to county detention data to understand the prevalence of youth discharged from detention into homelessness.

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 youth served in multiple public systems.

Standardize and publish an annual statewide count of unaccompanied homeless youth.

Publish comprehensive state Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction data on homeless students annually, rather than biannually, and allow integration of homeless student data with HMIS and the Integrated Client Database at DSHS to allow for comprehensive analysis on homeless youth.

Consistently disaggregate data on homeless youth by race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

4. CROSS-CUTTING APPROACH: SKILLED WORKFORCE

A strong, skilled, and supported workforce is needed to provide the best care, continuity, and services

[20] Issue elevated by WACHYA

[21] Issue elevated by WACHYA

Funding Solution | Legislative Directive | Policy Solution | Practice Solution

RECOMMENDATIONS

for homeless youth. Enhancements to services and supports for homeless youth should ensure that the proper workforce is in place to carry out the work.

- ***Increase wages, salaries, and benefits of direct service staff*** to meet regional costs-of-living and be competitive with other professions. Increased state funding and payment rates to youth-service providers is needed to accomplish this.

- ***Provide training to staff on best practices of care*** including harm reduction, trauma informed care, and positive youth development.

- ***Increase the number of behavioral health specialists*** trained to work with adolescents.

5. CROSS-CUTTING APPROACH: 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. Implementation of any strategy in this report should ensure that the proper public systems are engaged.

- ***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 a shared goal in Results Washington*** that no state system discharge youth into homelessness.

- ***Establish a Governor's cabinet on youth homelessness or interagency work group*** to promote accountability, improve efficiency, and establish strategic collaboration in the effort to end youth homelessness across state government.

- ***Use a wrap-around and integrated service delivery system*** that includes case managers across the different domains of behavioral health, education, housing, and employment.

6. CROSS-CUTTING APPROACH: ACCESSIBLE SERVICES

Even when housing, jobs, and services are available, young people often face barriers to accessing them. As progress is made to increase housing and services available to young people, strategies should be in place to remove barriers and safeguard access to those services.

- ***Address barriers to employment and housing by youth with criminal records.***

- ***Make legal advocacy services available to youth and families*** so they can navigate their options and have an advocate in the courtroom.

- ***Help young people obtain documentation,*** such as SSN, birth certificates, and state IDs, which are necessary to obtaining employment and housing.

- ***Provide navigators to help youth access services across a variety of systems*** such as housing, education, employment, and health care.

Funding Solution | Legislative Directive | Policy Solution | Practice Solution

RECOMMENDATIONS

STRATEGIES BY GOAL:

STABLE HOUSING

A safe and stable place to call home provides the foundation young people need to succeed in school, maintain good health, and develop socially and emotionally. A safe place should be readily available during crisis so that no young person has to spend a single night on the street. Homelessness can and should be prevented for youth who are known to be at risk, particularly those exiting public systems such as foster care or juvenile justice.

RESULTS

- Homeless youth and young adults have a safe and stable place to sleep each night until permanency can be reached.
- No youth discharged from a public system of care will be discharged into homelessness[22]

INDICATORS

- ▲ Exits to safe and stable housing
- ▼ Newly homeless
- ▼ Returns to homelessness
- ▼ Length of time in program
- ▼ Discharged to the street from public systems
- ▼ Count of unsheltered

1. STABLE HOUSING STRATEGY: EXPAND OUTREACH EFFORTS TO IDENTIFY AND ENGAGE HOMELESS YOUTH

The Street Youth Services program helps youth get off the street by building relationships between outreach workers and runaway and homeless youth. This is often the first point of contact with a young person experiencing homelessness, and presents an important opportunity to connect youth to services, provide survival aid, and prevent sexual abuse and exploitation.

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 availability of Street Youth Services and extend eligibility to age 24. Services are currently limited to youth under age 18, yet 87 percent of homeless youth identified through HMIS are ages 18-24.

2. STABLE HOUSING STRATEGY: EXPAND HOUSING OPTIONS THAT MEET THE INDIVIDUAL NEEDS OF YOUTH AND COMMUNITIES

A one-size-fits all approach to housing youth is unlikely to be successful. Factors such as regional variations in infrastructure and capacity, the individual circumstances faced by young people, differing developmental needs between youth and young adults , and the importance of youth having a choice in where they call home all point to the need to expand housing options.

Support an emergency housing model for rural communities. Host Homes are a promising

[22] The OHY is working with DSHS's Research and Data Analysis division to measure this outcome. Data is expected to be available in 2017.

RECOMMENDATIONS

model in which community members provide youth with shelter and basic needs while a service provider delivers case management, program coordination, and host home support.

Promote low-barrier shelter practices that make services more accessible to the hardest to reach youth. This includes allowing access to youth who may otherwise be turned away due to struggles with mental illness, drug or alcohol use, criminal backgrounds, or other factors.

Increase funding for the Young Adult Housing Program, which provides transitional housing and rental assistance to young adults age 18-24.[23]

Prohibit discrimination against renters based on their source of income or youth status.

Expand eligibility for existing programs that are limited to foster youth, This could include the Responsible Living Skills Program,[24] Independent Living Program,[25] and Extended Foster Care Program,[26] all of which are administered by the DSHS Children's Administration. Alternatively, the state could create state-only funded programs that mirror these models.

Develop housing designed for youth with unique needs such as homeless youth who are parenting, youth who are victims of commercial sexual exploitation, and LGBTQ youth.

Improve licensing options and standards. Assess whether current licensing requirements and standards used for shelters and Extended Foster Care placements are appropriate and overseen by the appropriate body.

3. STABLE HOUSING STRATEGY: PREVENT EXITS TO HOMELESSNESS FOR YOUTH INVOLVED IN PUBLIC SYSTEMS

A common pathway into homelessness occurs when youth exit a public system without a stable home. In a single year, more than 1,700 youth experienced homelessness after aging out of foster care, exiting a juvenile justice facility, or leaving a chemical dependency treatment facility.

Implement a risk assessment and referral process for youth in public systems of care. Institute a standardized assessment tool to identify youth at risk of homelessness and a streamlined process to connect them to services.

Require comprehensive transition plans for youth that include housing, education, and employment components with meaningful steps for achieving goals. The plans should include 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 checklist (addressing issues such as a clean credit report, legal documents in-hand, including identification and birth certificate, and establishing a bank account).

Establish an interagency workgroup or Governor's cabinet on youth homelessness with representatives from agencies such as the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Employment Security Department, and the DSHS Children's Administration, Juvenile Rehabilitative Administration, and Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery Services, etc. The work group would establish a set of shared

[23] The OHY is working with DSHS's Research and Data Analysis division to measure this outcome. Data is expected to be available in 2017.

[24] https://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/adolescents/responsible-living-skills-program-rlsp

[25] https://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/adolescents/independent-living-program

[26] https://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/adolescents/extended-foster-care-program

Funding Solution | Legislative Directive | Policy Solution | Practice Solution

RECOMMENDATIONS

goals and accountability across state government to prevent and end youth homelessness.

Require that courts not dismiss a dependency without a transition plan that identifies definitive stable housing.

Evaluate the Extended Foster Care Program[27] to determine if the program is accessible and working as intended for youth currently eligible. Expand options to enroll in Extended Foster Care by allowing participants to opt-in and out any time up to age 21, and allow youth to qualify if they were formerly a state dependent but not a dependent at the time of enrollment.[28]

STRATEGIES BY GOAL:

FAMILY RECONCILIATION

Youth under the age of 18 need the care and protection of responsible adults. When it is safe and appropriate to do so, the ideal outcome is to mend relationships with family so that youth can remain home and maintain healthy adult relationships. When family reunification is not possible, we must ensure that another guardian or system takes on responsibility for the safety and well-being of youth.

RESULTS

- Homeless youth are reunified with family when safe and appropriate
- Youth who cannot return home are provided safe, supportive, and stable housing

INDICATORS

- Reunited with family

These strategies apply to minor youth under age 18

1. FAMILY RECONCILIATION STRATEGY: IMPROVE AND EXPAND FAMILY RECONCILIATION SERVICES TO SUPPORT YOUTH RETURNING HOME

When it is safe and appropriate to do so, reuniting families is the optimal way to resolve youth homelessness. Family reconciliation through counseling, mental health treatment, or other services, can help families resolve conflict and problem-solve challenges they may be facing.

Conduct an evaluation of the availability, accessibility, and effectiveness of the Children Administration's Family Reconciliation Services Program[29] to ensure we are providing adequate services to families in crisis.

Examine alternative models of family reconciliation and methods of delivering services, such as building the capacity of youth service providers to have a licensed family therapist on staff or on contract so that services are more directly available and integrated.

Include a mental health evaluation as part of reconciliation services.

Ensure reconciliation services are proficient in helping youth with unique needs reconcile with family, including LGBTQ youth, youth of color, and youth with developmental disabilities.

[27] https://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/adolescents/extended-foster-care-program
[28] Issue elevated by WACHYA
[29] https://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/practices-and-procedures-guide/3100-family-reconciliation-services

Funding Solution | Legislative Directive | Policy Solution | Practice Solution

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. FAMILY RECONCILIATION STRATEGY: PROVIDE CRISIS INTERVENTION AND DIVERSION SERVICES TO FAMILIES AND YOUTH

Conflict within families and involvement in child welfare and juvenile justice create instability that can lead to homelessness for young people. Early interventions help families remain together in healthy relationship and tackle underlying causes of homelessness.

Support families by assisting them in accessing and applying for other public benefits such as food stamps, Temporary Aassistance for Needy Families, disability, Supplemental Security Income, physical and behavioral health, or other benefits.

Increase funding and support services that are available to family/relatives and other natural supports that would result in youth being able to remain housed with their family/relatives/natural supports.

Establish a crisis hotline and support groups for families in conflict to address underlying issues and keep youth off the streets.

Utilize Crisis Residential Centers to serve families who need respite and support services to reconcile.

Expand diversion interventions to prevent youth from entering juvenile detention for status offenses. Community truancy boards and the Annie E Casey Foundation's Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative[30] create alternative interventions for youth, but access is limited.

Reform status offense laws to reduce the number of youth detained for actions like violating curfew and running away.

TACOMA MOCKINGBIRD YOUTH NETWORK CHAPTER RECOMENDATION

Topic: Eliminating Youth Detention for Status Offenses and Expanding Family Reconciliation Services

The Tacoma Chapter wants to eliminate use of the Valid Court Order Exception in Washington state that allows juvenile detention for status offenses. In addition, the Chapter is advocating for funding to restore and expand the Family Reconciliation Services program to prevent juvenile detention and provide families with supportive alternatives. Status offenses only apply to youth under 18, and punish young people for actions like running away or breaking curfew. Washington detains youth for status offenses more than any other state in the country. Studies have found that juvenile detention usually increases the severity of problem behaviors and can increase the chances that the youth will be detained or incarcerated in the future. Juvenile detention can also worsen mental illness and put youth at greater risk for self-harm. By prioritizing early intervention and reconciliation, and eliminating the practice of detaining minors for status offenses, the state could save money and ensure better outcomes for at-risk youth and their families.

3. FAMILY RECONCILIATION STRATEGY: STRENGTHEN SUPPORTS FOR OLDER ADOLESCENTS

Older adolescents face unique challenges when they become separated from family support. They are on the cusp of adulthood and exploring their independence, yet they do not have the life skills or the legal or financial means to live independently. Teenage years are still a vulnerable time period where young people need the care and guidance of adults. Despite this, we lack a public system that is fully responsible for the care of these young people. They often don't meet the criteria for foster care, yet our patchwork of homeless youth programs is insufficient to meet the needs.

[30] https://www.dshs.wa.gov/ra/office-juvenile-justice/jdai-juvenile-detention-alternatives-initiative

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Establish an adequate public system response to meet the specific needs of older minor youth who cannot return home and are deemed not appropriate for foster care.

Provide options and tools for youth to appeal denials of services through the child protective system.

Provide flexible housing options for 17 year-olds in foster care that allows for more independence, such as supervised independent living placements that are allowable under Extended Foster Care.

Address the shortage of foster parents. Increase resources for recruitment and retention of foster care homes and increase overall foster care placement options. Implement the Mockingbird Family Model[31] to support and retain caregivers. *[Everett Mockingbird Youth Network Chapter recommendation]*

STRATEGIES BY GOAL:

PERMANENT CONNECTIONS

It is often said that just one caring adult can change the life of a young person. Positive, healthy connections with adults help young people get the guidance and support they need to navigate adolescence and serve as models for developing healthy relationships with others. These connections can come from mentors, teachers, employers, extended family, and others who have a regular presence in the life of a young person.

RESULTS

- Homeless youth have healthy, positive relationships with adults

INDICATORS

- Have a consistent case manager until stable housing/independence is achieved[32]
- Can identify an adult with whom they have a positive, healthy relationship[33]

1. PERMANENT CONNECTIONS STRATEGY: PROMOTE HEALTHY ADULT CONNECTIONS

Youth who do not experience healthy relationships within their family can benefit greatly from positive connections to other adults such as mentors and extended family. Healthy adult relationships serve as important models for young people.

Promote contacts with extended family, family friends, and family of choice.

Encourage, coordinate, and provide financial support for pro-social activities within programs that serve homeless youth (i.e., 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 and opportunities in those interest areas. Match youth with existing mentorship/ positive

[31] http://www.mockingbirdsociety.org/index.php/what-we-do/mockingbird-family-model

[32] Data for this measure will be collected via a client survey that is currently under development

[33] Ibid.

RECOMMENDATIONS

development organizations such as Big Brothers Big Sisters and the Boys and Girls Clubs.

2. PERMANENT CONNECTIONS STRATEGY: INCREASE CONTINUITY OF CASE MANAGEMENT

Consistency is key for young people who have experienced a lot of instability in their life. Having a dependable case worker with whom trust has been built helps young people make progress in their own life.

Efforts should be made to facilitate consistency of case managers. Assigning a single case manager, or navigator, for a youth would increase efficiency and avoid the trauma youth experience from retelling their story as they access multiple services.

STRATEGIES BY GOAL:

EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT

The role of education and employment are instrumental in giving young people the skills they will need to be successful as adults. Connection to school and work also provides stability, valuable exposure to healthy adult relationships, and the chance for young people to discover their own abilities and develop a positive sense of self.

The re-authorization of the federal McKinney-Vento Act, known as "Every Student Succeeds Act," strengthens requirements for schools to identify homeless students and provide the support they need to attend school, complete their high school education, and pursue higher education. The landmark Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) places an emphasis on providing work experience and training to youth and young adults who are disconnected from school and work. Washington can leverage these federal opportunities to prevent and end youth homelessness.

EDUCATION

RESULTS

- Homeless students succeed academically and have the skills they need to become independent and self sufficient

INDICATORS

- ▲ Enrolled and attending school
- ▲ High school graduation rates[34]
- ▲ Academic testing scores[35]
- ▲ Life skills
- ▼ Absenteeism, expulsions, suspensions, truancy[36]

1. EDUCATION STRATEGY: IMPROVE EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Nearly 6,000 students in our K-12 public schools are without a stable place to call home and lack the support of a parent or guardian.[37] Schools play an

[34] Data for this measure will be reported biannually by OSPI beginning in 2017.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Analysis of OSPI data conducted by Columbia Legal Services (SY 2014-15).

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imperative role in identifying these students, connecting them to services, and supporting their academic success.

Support schools to fully implement the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), and ensure accountability. A key provision of ESSA requires every school district to have a homeless student liaison that has the capacity to sufficiently identify homeless students, train staff, ensure school enrollment, assist with transportation, connect students to services, and support them to succeed in school. The act also requires technical assistance and professional development for local liaisons.

Building on the requirements in ESSA and our state's Homeless Student Stability Act (Third Substitute House Bill 1682)[38], a trained staff person should be designated in every K-12 public school building that can build relationships with young people, identify homeless students, utilize assessments to identify those at risk of homelessness, and create individualized support plans for their educational success. *[Youth Advocates Ending Homelessness Recommendation]*

Fully implement the Homeless Student Stability Program to connect older youth and unaccompanied youth with services and housing.

Adopt trauma-informed discipline in high schools with elevated rates of homelessness and disproportionality. Trauma-informed discipline is an approach to engaging students with histories of trauma, such as abuse and neglect, in which teachers are able to recognize the presence of trauma symptoms, prevent problems from escalating, and respond effectively when students do act out.

Improve high school graduation rates by awarding students with partial or full credit for courses completed at a prior school. Students experiencing homelessness often lose ground in their academic progress as they balance school with daily survival and lack a consistent place to stay. Under ESSA, school districts have a responsibility to support credit-accrual policies. *[Seattle Mockingbird Youth Network Chapter recommendation]*

YOUTH ADVOCATES ENDING HOMELESSNESS (YAEH) RECOMMENDATION

Topic: Educational Supports for Students Experiencing Homelessness

The Youth Advocates Ending Homelessness (YAEH) Chapter wants to improve high school graduation rates for students experiencing homelessness or housing instability by ensuring there is 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. Furthermore, the Chapter proposes the state guarantee supplemental instruction and services to these students under the state's definition of basic education. Experts estimate there are over 6,000 unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness or housing instability in Washington's schools. These youths are more likely to fare worse on standardized tests, are disproportionally individuals of color, and are 240 percent more likely to drop out of school. Only 30 out of 295 school districts in Washington receive federal McKinney-Vento funding intended to meet the needs of homeless students, which YAEH members believe is insufficient. By providing funding for a point person in every school and prioritizing the needs of homeless students alongside other vulnerable student populations, the state can better provide youth the supports and tools they need to graduate at an equal rate with their stably housed peers.

[38] http://lawfilesext.leg.wa.gov/biennium/2015-16/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Laws/House/1682-S3.SL.pdf

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2. EDUCATION STRATEGY: SUPPORT HOMELESS STUDENTS IN ACCESSING AND SUCCEEDING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

A college education is often the ticket to a better life. Yet young people who lack the stability of a home can find that getting in and remaining in college can be especially challenging. Even completing financial aid documents without parental support can be a hurdle, not to mention the difficulty of balancing coursework while also struggling to meet basic needs.

Require higher education institutions to submit a plan to the Washington 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.

Increase support for students to attend college and apply for financial aid. The ESSA requires homeless student liaisons, along with guidance counselors, to ensure homeless students receive information and individualized counseling to assess college readiness and apply for college and financial aid. Colleges and services providers should also increase their role in helping homeless students apply for financial aid.

3. EDUCATION STRATEGY: HELP HOMELESS YOUTH TRANSITIONING TO ADULTHOOD OBTAIN INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS

While homeless youth have been forced to master survival skills, they often have not been taught or ex

posed to the day-to-day skills needed to function independently in society. This includes things like money management, hygiene, employment, decision-making, apartment living, and self-esteem.

Incorporate an independent living skills curriculum into programs that serve youth and young adults.

Expand the Children Administration's Independent Living Program[39] to serve homeless youth ages 15 through 21.

[39] https://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/adolescents/independent-living-program

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RECOMMENDATIONS

EMPLOYMENT

RESULTS

- Homeless young adults obtain employment

INDICATORS

- Employed
- Availability of work and training opportunities[40]
- Improved economic self-sufficiency

1. EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY: CONNECT YOUTH TO WORK-BASED LEARNING AND INTERNSHIPS THAT LEAD TO EMPLOYMENT

Homelessness poses an almost insurmountable barrier to getting a job and can be very disruptive to staying and engaging in school. Collaboration among the workforce system, employers, schools, and programs that serve homeless youth can greatly improve and expand opportunities available to youth. In particular, opportunities that provide education alongside work experience help young people contextualize what they are learning and practice applying it in a job.

Expand YouthWorks[41] and dedicate 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 im prove education and employment outcomes for young people with low-incomes. YouthWorks provides opportunities for homeless youth to enroll in programs that combine education and training, employment and job placement, and housing support.

Leverage the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act[42] to increase work experience, training, and apprenticeship opportunities for young people experiencing homelessness.

2. EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY: PROVIDE SUPPORTS THAT MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR YOUTH TO GET AND KEEP A JOB

Homeless youth often face barriers to getting and keeping a job. Something as basic as having identification can be a struggle for youth who do not have access to the necessary documentation, like a birth certificate, and may not be able to afford the cost of an ID card. For youth in rural communities, transportation can be a make or break factor for getting to and from a job.

Expand transportation resources so youth and young adults can job search and get back and forth to work. Make it easier for youth to obtain driver's licenses and permits. *[Olympia Mockingbird Youth Network Chapter recommendation]*

Increase collaboration between youth service providers, the state departments of Licensing and Health, and the federal Social Security Administration to help youth acquire legal documents required to establish eligibility to work in the United States.

[40] Data for this measure will be collected via a client survey that is currently under development

[41] http://wtb.wa.gov/YouthWorks.asp

[42] https://www.doleta.gov/wioa/

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STRATEGIES BY GOAL:

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

Adolescence is an important time for youth to form their identity and learn to be an adult. Maintaining good health, physically and mentally, are important to this development. Social and emotional well-being come about from opportunities that help young people develop a sense of self-worth, practice decision-making, and learn how to communicate and work with others.

RESULTS

- Homeless youth and young adults are healthy physically, socially, and emotionally
- Programs for homeless youth identify, encourage, and nurture each youth's strengths and abilities and demonstrate a commitment to youth-centered programing

INDICATORS

- Have health insurance
- Physical and mental health status
- Opportunities for clients to participate in program planning and policy development[43]

1. SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING STRATEGY:

IMPROVE ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT

Experiences of homelessness put youth at greater risk of drug and alcohol abuse as well as psychiatric disorders such as depression, anxiety, and posttraumatic stress disorder. Homeless young adults have rates of psychiatric disorders as high as four times that of their peers.[44] It's critical that homeless youth get treatment for mental health issues and substance abuse.

Provide youth with access to a behavioral health specialist at any place where they are being served, including schools and along the homeless service continuum. Build the 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.[45]

Support continued treatment and a supportive environment for youth exiting treatment facilities. Group recovery housing such as Oxford Houses provide a supportive environment for youth to live a clean and sober life.

Create a system of on-demand, developmentally appropriate detox treatment beds for youth.

Ensure mental health services for youth throughout the state are trauma-informed, strengths based, culturally competent and use a Positive Youth Development framework.

[43] Data for this measure will be collected via a client survey that is currently under development.

[44] National Health Care for the Homeless Council (2015). InFocus, Volume 3, Issue 4. https://www.nhchc.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/in-focus-behavioral-health-among-youth.pdf

[45] See page 15 of A Way Home Washington report for details on integrating mental health can homeless services.
Issue elevated by WACHYA

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RECOMMENDATIONS

2. SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING STRATEGY: IMPROVE ACCESS TO QUALITY HEALTH CARE

Homelessness exposes young people to greater health risks, such as poor nutrition, bad oral health, and sexually transmitted infections. Proper access to quality health care can treat poor health conditions and prevent chronic disease.

- ***Increase collaboration between homeless youth providers and Health Care Authority in-person assistors*** to help eligible youth sign up for health insurance, or train youth providers to become in person assistors within their agencies.
- ***Help youth identify and establish relationships with primary care providers*** that can address their healthcare needs.
- ***Provide access to sexual and reproductive health services*** including comprehensive sex education to prevent unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections. *[Spokane Mockingbird Youth Network Chapter recommendation]*.
- ***Continue support for the 1115 Medicaid Transformation Waiver.***

3. SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING STRATEGY: SUPPORT YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Adolescence can be both a challenging and exciting time. It's a period of transition to adulthood where young people discover their self-identity and independence. To support healthy development into adulthood, it's important for young people to have opportunities to build skills, practice leadership, and discover their autonomy, while under the guidance of caring adults.

- ***Build opportunties for homeless and formerly homeless youth to provide input and leadership*** in systems reform and service programming.
- ***Allow youth to be the architects of their future*** by providing case management tools, such as an "Individual Development Plan" for youth to identify their goals and for service providers to build a plan of support and services to help youth reach their goals. Use priority areas as the framework (stable housing; family reconciliation; permanent connections; education and employment, social and emotional well-being).

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY TABLES

Table 2.

NEAR TERM ACTION AGENDA	
1. **ENSURE THAT YOUTH EXITING PUBLIC SYSTEMS HAVE A SAFE, STABLE PLACE TO GO**	• Establish an interagency workgroup or a Governor's cabinet on youth homelessness. • Implement a risk assessment and referral process for youth in public systems of care. • Require comprehensive transition plans for youth under the care of public systems. • Expand options to enroll in Extended Foster Care (EFC). • Target outreach efforts to identify system-involved youth who are at risk of homelessness.
2. **INVEST IN CRISIS INTERVENTION AND DIVERSION**	• Provide crisis intervention services to families in conflict. • Utilize Crisis Residential Centers to serve families who need respite and support to reconcile. • Improve and expand family reconciliation services. • Expand diversion interventions to prevent youth from entering juvenile detention for status offenses. • Reform status offense laws to reduce the number of youth detained for actions like violating curfew and running away.
3. **LEVERAGE THE FEDERAL MCKINNEY-VENTO ACT TO IMPROVE EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES**	• Designate a trained homeless student liaison in every K-12 public school. • Expand housing options available through the state Homeless Student Stability Program to connect older youth and unaccompanied youth with services and housing. • Expand YouthWorks to increase work-based learning and training opportunities for youth. • Support schools to fully implement the Every Student Succeeds Act
CROSS-CUTTING APPROACHES	
1. **EQUITABLE OUTCOMES**	• Increase the cultural competency of state agencies and service providers. • Adopt an equity impact tool to evaluate policy and fiscal proposals. • Designate funding for services and interventions targeted to LGBTQ youth and youth of color. • Adopt and implement a set of protocols and best practices for serving youth of color and LGBTQ youth. • Expand housing and services to all counties of the state. • Provide technical assistance to smaller communities.
2. **SUSTAINABLE FUNDING**	• Move OHY funding to Commerce's base budget, rather than as individual provisos. • Increase funding for existing homeless youth programs to implement incentive payments for providers who exceed performance standards. • Remove the requirement that 45 percent of funding from the Home Security Fund be spent on rental or leasing payments to for-profit entities. • Renew the document recording fee without adding a future sunset date.

RECOMMENDATIONS

CROSS-CUTTING APPROACHES	
3. DATA QUALITY	• Allow minors to provide written consent to share their personally identifying information in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). • Develop performance measures for homeless youth programs. • Improve access to county detention data to understand the prevalence of youth discharged from detention into homelessness. • Explore real-time data sharing options for youth involved in the juvenile justice, child welfare, and education systems to increase case coordination. • Standardize and publish an annual statewide count of unaccompanied homeless youth. • Publish comprehensive OSPI data on homeless students annually, rather than biannually, and allow integration of homeless student data with other data systems.
4. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT	• Increase wages, salaries, and benefits of direct service staff. • Provide training to staff on best practices of care including harm reduction, trauma informed care, and positive youth development. • Increase the number of behavioral health specialists trained to work with adolescents.
5. SHARED STATEWIDE GOALS AND OUTCOMES	• Provide authority and funding to the OHY to grant resources to other public entities to prevent exits to homelessness. • Adopt and measure a shared goal in Results Washington that no state system discharge youth into homelessness. • Establish a Governor's cabinet on youth homelessness or interagency work group. • Use a wrap-around and integrated service delivery system that includes case managers across the different domains of behavioral health, education, housing, and employment.
6. REMOVE BARRIER TO SERVICES	• Address barriers to employment and housing by youth with criminal records. • Make legal advocacy services available to youth and families. • Help young people obtain documentation, such as SSN, birth certificates, and state IDs. • Provide navigators to help youth access services across a variety of systems such as housing, education, employment, and health care.

RECOMMENDATIONS

STRATEGIES & OUTCOMES BY GOAL

AREA	STRATEGY	RESULTS	OUTCOME MEASURES (INDICATORS)
STABLE HOUSING	1. EXPAND OUTREACH EFFORTS TO IDENTIFY AND ENGAGE HOMELESS YOUTH 2. EXPAND HOUSING OPTIONS THAT MEET THE INDIVIDUAL NEEDS OF YOUTH AND COMMUNITIES 3. PREVENT EXITS TO HOMELESSNESS FOR YOUTH INVOLVED IN PUBLIC SYSTEMS	• Homeless youth and young adults have a safe and stable place to sleep each night until permanency can be reached • No youth discharged from a public system of care will be discharged into homelessness	▲ Exits to safe and stable housing ▼ Number of new homeless ▼ Returns to homelessness ▼ Length of time in program ▼ Discharged to the street from public systems ▼ Count of unsheltered
FAMILY RECONCILIATION	1. IMPROVE AND EXPAND FAMILY RECONCILIATION SERVICES TO SUPPORT YOUTH RETURNING HOME 2. PROVIDE CRISIS INTERVENTION AND DIVERSION SERVICES TO FAMILIES AND YOUTH 3. STRENGTHEN SUPPORTS FOR OLDER ADOLESCENTS	• Homeless youth are reunified with family when safe and appropriate • Youth who cannot return home are provided safe, supportive, and stable housing	▲ Reunited with family
PERMANENT CONNECTIONS	1. PROMOTE HEALTHY ADULT CONNECTIONS WITH EXTENDED FAMILY, FRIENDS, AND MENTORS 2. INCREASE CONTINUITY OF CASE MANAGEMENT	• Homeless youth have healthy, positive relationships with adults	▲ Have a consistent case manager until stable housing/independence is achieved ▲ Can identify an adult with whom they have a positive, healthy relationship
EDUCATION	1. IMPROVE EDUCATION OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS 2. SUPPORT HOMELESS STUDENTS IN ACCESSING AND SUCCEEDING IN HIGHER EDUCATION 3. HELP YOUTH TRANSITIONING TO ADULTHOOD OBTAIN INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS	• Homeless students succeed academically and have the skills they need to become independent and self-sufficient	▲ Enrolled and attending school ▲ High school graduation rates ▲ Academic testing scores ▼ Absenteeism, expulsions, suspensions, truancy ▲ Life skills

RECOMMENDATIONS

STRATEGIES & OUTCOMES BY GOAL

AREA	STRATEGY	RESULTS	OUTCOME MEASURES (INDICATORS)
EMPLOYMENT	1. CONNECT YOUTH TO WORK-BASED LEARNING AND INTERNSHIPS THAT LEAD TO EMPLOYMENT 2. PROVIDE SUPPORTS THAT MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR YOUTH TO GET AND KEEP A JOB	• Homeless young adults obtain employment	▲ Employed ▲ Availability of work and training opportunities ▲ Improved economic self-sufficiency
SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING	3. IMPROVE ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT 4. IMPROVE ACCESS TO QUALITY HEALTH CARE 5. SUPPORT YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN PROGRAMS AND SERVICES	• Homeless youth and young adults are healthy physically, socially, and emotionally • Programs for homeless youth identify, encourage, and nurture each youth's strengths and abilities and demonstrate a commitment to youth-centered programming	▲ Have health insurance ▲ Physical and mental health status ▲ Opportunities for clients to participate in program planning and policy development

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE LEGISLATURE

EEQUITABLE OUTCOMES	• Adopt an equity impact tool to evaluate policy and fiscal proposals. • Allocate additional funding for programs that serve homeless youth to support services and interventions targeted to LGBTQ youth and youth of color • Expand legal advocacy for youth who have been discriminated against. • Provide funding for technical assistance to smaller communities to equip them with the skills and resources needed to effectively serve homeless youth in their community
SUSTAINABLE FUNDING	• Move OHY funding to Commerce's base budget, rather than as individual provisos with funding limited to specific programs. • Increase funding for existing homeless youth programs to implement incentive payments for providers who exceed performance standards and providers who serve higher-needs youth such as those who struggle with mental illness, substance abuse, or have criminal records. • Remove the requirement that 45 percent of funding from the Home Security Fund be spent on rental or leasing payments to for-profit entities. • Renew the document recording fee without adding a future sunset date.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE LEGISLATURE

DATA QUALITY	• Allow minors to provide written consent to share their personally identifying information in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). • Improve access to county detention data to understand the prevalence of youth discharged from detention into homelessness. • Explore real-time data sharing options for youth involved in the juvenile justice, child welfare, and education systems to increase case coordination. • Provide funding to standardize and publish an annual statewide count of unaccompanied homeless youth. • Publish comprehensive OSPI data on homeless students annually, rather than biannually, and allow integration of homeless student data with HMIS and the DSHS Integrated Client Database to allow for comprehensive analysis on homeless youth.
SKILLED WORKFORCE	• Increase wages, salaries, and benefits of direct service staff to meet regional costs-of-living and be competitive with other professions. • Increase the number of behavioral health specialists trained to work with adolescents.
SHARED STATEWIDE GOALS AND OUTCOMES	• 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. • Establish a Governor's cabinet on youth homelessness or interagency work group to promote accountability, improve efficiency, and establish strategic collaboration in the effort to end youth homelessness across state government. • Use a wrap-around and integrated service delivery system that includes case managers across the different domains of behavioral health, education, housing, and employment.
ACCESS TO SERVICES	• Address barriers to employment and housing by youth with criminal records. • Make legal advocacy services available to youth and families so they can navigate their options and have an advocate in the courtroom. • Provide navigators to help youth access services across a variety of systems such as housing, education, employment, and health care.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE LEGISLATURE	
STABLE HOUSING	• Expand availability of Street Youth Services and extend eligibility to age 24. • Support an emergency housing model for rural communities. • Increase funding for the Young Adult Housing Program, which provides transitional housing and rental assistance to young adults age 18-24. • Prohibit discrimination against renters based on their source of income or youth status. • Expand eligibility for existing programs that are limited to foster youth, to serve the broader population of homeless youth. • Develop housing designed for youth with unique needs such as homeless youth who are parenting, youth who are victims of commercial sexual exploitation, and LGBTQ youth. • Implement a risk assessment and referral process for youth in public systems of care. • Require comprehensive transition plans for youth exiting public systems of care. • Require that courts not dismiss a dependency without a transition plan that identifies definitive stable housing. • Evaluate current accessibility of Extended Foster Care and expand options to enroll.
FAMILY RECONCILIATION	• Conduct an evaluation of the availability, accessibility, and effectiveness of the Family Reconciliation Services program and examine alternative models of family reconciliation and methods of delivering services. • Increase funding and support services that are available to family/kin and other natural supports. • Establish a crisis hotline and support groups for families in conflict. • Expand diversion interventions to prevent youth from entering juvenile detention for status offenses. • Reform status offense laws to reduce the number of youth detained for actions like violating curfew and running away. • Establish an adequate public system response to meet the specific needs of older minor youth who cannot return home and are deemed not appropriate for foster care. • Provide options and tools for youth to appeal denials of services through the child protective system • Provide flexible housing options for 17 year olds in foster care that allows for more independence, such as supervised independent living placements that are allowable under Extended Foster Care. • Address the shortage of foster parents. Increase resources for recruitment and retention of foster care homes and increase overall foster care placements.
PERMANENT CONNECTIONS	• Facilitate consistency of case managers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE LEGISLATURE

EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION

- Support schools' ability to fully implement the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), and ensure accountability.
- Designate a trained staff person in every K-12 public school building that can build relationships with young people, identify homeless students, utilize assessments to identify those at risk of homelessness, and create individualized support plans for their educational success.
- Fully implement the Homeless Student Stability Program to connect older youth and unaccompanied youth with services and housing.
- Adopt trauma-informed discipline in high schools with elevated rates of homelessness and disproportionality.
- 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.
- Expand the Independent Living Program to serve homeless youth ages 15 through 21.
- Expand YouthWorks and dedicate a portion of funding to serve unaccompanied homeless youth.
- Expand transportation resources so youth and young adults can job search and get back and forth to work. Make it easier for youth to obtain driver's licenses and permits.

SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

- Provide youth with access to a behavioral health specialist at any place where they are being served, including schools and along the homeless service continuum.
- Support continued treatment and a supportive environment for youth exiting treatment facilities.
- Create a system of on-demand, developmentally appropriate detox treatment beds for youth.
- Continue support for the 1115 Medicaid Transformation Waiver.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNOR & EXCECUTIVE BRANCH

EEQUITABLE OUTCOMES

- Adopt and implement a set of protocols and best practices for serving youth of color and LGBTQ youth.
- Expand housing and services to all counties of the state so that youth do not have to leave their own community to get help. Develop a shelter and crisis intervention model for rural communities who don't have the capacity to obtain and staff a facility.
- Provide technical assistance to smaller communities to equip them with the skills and resources needed to effectively serve homeless youth in their community.

DATA QUALITY

- Consistently disaggregate data on homeless youth by race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender identity.
- Develop performance measures for homeless youth programs and incorporate into funding contracts.
- Standardize and publish an annual statewide count of unaccompanied homeless youth.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNOR & EXCECUTIVE BRANCH	
SKILLED WORKFORCE	• Provide training to staff on best practices of care including harm reduction, trauma informed care, and positive youth development.
SHARED STATEWIDE GOALS & OUTCOMES	• Adopt and measure a shared goal in Results Washington that no state system discharge youth into homelessness. • Establish a Governor's cabinet on youth homelessness or interagency work group to promote accountability, improve efficiency, and establish strategic collaboration in the effort to end youth homelessness across state government. • Use a wrap-around and integrated service delivery system that includes case managers across the different domains of behavioral health, education, housing, and employment.
ACCESS TO SERVICES	• Address barriers to employment and housing by youth with criminal records. • Help young people obtain documentation, such as SSN, birth certificates, and state IDs, which are necessary to obtaining employment and housing.
STABLE HOUSING	• 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. • Promote low barrier shelter practices that make services more accessible to the hardest to reach youth. • Develop housing designed for youth with unique needs such as homeless youth who are parenting, youth who are victims of commercial sexual exploitation, and LGBTQ youth. • Improve licensing options and standards. • Implement a risk assessment and referral process for youth in public systems of care. • Require comprehensive transition plans for youth exiting public systems of care.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNOR & EXECUTIVE BRANCH

FAMILY RECONCILIATION

- Include a mental health evaluation as part of reconciliation services.
- Ensure reconciliation services are proficient in helping youth with unique needs reconcile with family, including LGBTQ youth, youth of color, and youth with developmental disabilities.
- Support families by assisting them in accessing and applying for other public benefits.
- Increase funding and support services that are available to family/kin and other natural supports.
- Establish a crisis hotline and support groups for families in conflict.
- Utilize Crisis Residential Centers to serve families who need respite and support services to reconcile.
- Establish an adequate public system response to meet the specific needs of older minor youth who cannot return home and are deemed not appropriate for foster care.
- Provide options and tools for youth to appeal denials of services through the child protective system.

PERMANENT CONNECTIONS

- Promote contacts with extended family, family friends, and family of choice.
- Encourage, coordinate, and provide financial support for pro-social activities within programs that serve homeless youth.
- Conduct assessments with youth that identify core strengths, skills, hobbies, and interests, and then match youth up with community mentors and opportunities in those interest areas.

EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION

- Support schools' ability to fully implement the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), and ensure accountability.
- Fully implement the Homeless Student Stability Program to connect older youth and unaccompanied youth with services and housing.
- Adopt trauma-informed discipline in high schools with elevated rates of homelessness and disproportionality.
- Improve high school graduation rates by awarding students with partial or full credit for courses completed at a prior school.
- 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.
- Increase support for students to attend college and apply for financial aid.
- Incorporate an independent living skills curriculum into programs that serve youth and young adults.
- Leverage the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to increase work experience, training, and apprenticeship opportunities for young people experiencing homelessness.
- Expand transportation resources so youth and young adults can job search and get back and forth to work. Make it easier for youth to obtain driver's licenses and permits.
- Increase collaboration between youth service providers, Department of Licensing, Social Security Administration, and Department Oof Health to help youth acquire legal documents required to establish eligibility to work in the United States.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNOR & EXCECUTIVE BRANCH

SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

- Provide youth with access to a behavioral health specialist at any place where they are being served, including schools and along the homeless service continuum.
- Ensure mental health services for youth throughout the state are trauma-informed, strengths based, culturally competent and use a positive youth development framework.
- Increase collaboration between homeless youth providers and Health Care Authority in-person assistors to help eligible youth sign up for health insurance, or train youth providers to become in person assistors within their agencies.
- Help youth identify and establish relationships with primary health care providers that can address their healthcare needs.
- Provide access to sexual and reproductive health services including comprehensive sex education to prevent unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections.
- Build infrastructure to allow homeless and formerly homeless youth to provide input and leadership in systems reform and service programming.
- Allow youth to be the architects of their future by providing case management tools, such as an "Individual Development Plan" for youth to identify their goals and for service providers to build a plan of support and services to help youth reach their goals.

Definitions of Homelessness for Federal Program Serving Children, Youth, and Families

The two major definitions of homelessness in use by federal agencies are the education definition in Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Act, and the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) definition in Section 103 of Subtitle I of the McKinney-Vento Act. The following chart illustrates the similarities and differences between federal agencies' definitions of homeless. In December 2011, HUD issued complex regulations on the HEARTH definition of homelessness.

	EDUCATION DEFINITION	HUD DEFINITION – PRIOR TO 2009	HUD DEFINITION – HEARTH ACT - CURRENT	RHYA DEFINITION
Statutory Reference:	**Section 725 of Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Act**	**Section 103 of Subtitle I of the McKinney-Vento Act**	**Section 103 of Subtitle I of the McKinney-Vento Act**	**Section 387 of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act**
Federal Programs and Agencies Using This Definition:	**- Elementary and Secondary Education (ED)** **- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (ED)** **- Higher Education Act (ED)** **- Head Start Act (HHS)** **- Child Nutrition Act (USDA)** **- Violence Against Women Act (DOJ)**	**- Homeless Assistance Programs (HUD)** **- Emergency Food and Shelter (Homeland Security)** **- Department of Veterans Affairs (all programs)** **- Department of Labor (all programs)**	**- Homeless Assistance Programs (HUD)**	**Runaway and Homeless Youth Act Programs (HHS)**
LIVING SITUATIONS COVERED BY THESE DEFINITIONS				
Unsheltered Locations	**Yes:** "(ii) children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings (within the meaning of section 103(a)(2)(C)); (iii) children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings"	**Yes:** "an individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings."	**Yes:** "an individual or family with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground;"	**Yes, if the youth cannot live with relatives and has no other safe place to go:** "a youth… for whom it is not possible to live in a safe environment with a relative, and who has no other safe alternative living arrangement."
Emergency Shelters and Transitional Housing	**Yes:** "children and youth who are living in emergency or transitional shelters"	**Yes:** "a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations"	**Yes:** "an individual or family living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements"	**Yes, if the youth cannot live with relatives and has no other safe place to go:** "a youth… for whom it is not possible to live in a safe environment with a relative, and who has no other safe alternative living arrangement."

Source: Administration for Children and Families, US Department of Health and Human Services

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	EDUCATION DEFINITION	HUD DEFINITION – PRIOR TO 2009	HUD DEFINITION – HEARTH ACT - CURRENT	RHYA DEFINITION
Motels and Hotels	**Yes, if there are no appropriate alternatives**: "children and youth who are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations" (emphasis added)	**No, except for "welfare hotels":** "an individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill);"	**Generally, no, except for the following situations:** - "hotels and motels paid for by Federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals or by charitable organizations" - "an individual or family who has a primary nighttime residence that is a room in a hotel or motel and where they lack the resources necessary to reside there for more than 14 days, who has no subsequent residence identified; and lacks the resources or support networks needed to obtain other permanent housing;" - "any individual or family who is fleeing, or is attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life threatening conditions in the individual's or family's current housing situation, including where the health and safety of children are jeopardized, and who have no other residence and lack the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing" - "unaccompanied youth and homeless families with children and youth defined as homeless under other Federal statutes who have experienced a long term period without living independently in permanent housing; and have experienced persistent instability as measured by frequent moves over such period; and can be expected to continue in such status for an extended period of time because of chronic disabilities, chronic physical health or mental health conditions, substance addiction, histories of domestic violence or childhood abuse, the presence of a child or youth with a disability, or multiple barriers to employment.	**Yes, if the youth cannot live with relatives and has no other safe place to go:** "a youth… for whom it is not possible to live in a safe environment with a relative, and who has no other safe alternative living arrangement."

Source: Administration for Children and Families, US Department of Health and Human Services

	EDUCATION DEFINITION	HUD DEFINITION – PRIOR TO 2009	HUD DEFINITION – HEARTH ACT - CURRENT	RHYA DEFINITION
Staying with Others ("Doubled-Up")	**Yes, if it is due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar situation (within the definition of lacking fixed, regular, and adequate situations):** "…individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence (within the meaning of section 103(a)(1)); and (B) includes — (i) children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;"	**No**	**Generally, no, except the following situations:** "an individual or family who will imminently lose their housing, including housing they are sharing with others, as evidenced by credible evidence indicating that the owner or renter of the housing will not allow the individual or family to stay for more than 14 days, and who has no subsequent residence identified; and who lacks the resources or support networks needed to obtain other permanent housing: - "any individual or family who is fleeing, or is attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life threatening conditions in the individual's or family's current housing situation, including where the health and safety of children are jeopardized, and who have no other residence and lack the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing" - "unaccompanied youth and homeless families with children and youth defined as homeless under other Federal statutes who have experienced a long term period without living independently in permanent housing; and have experienced persistent instability as measured by frequent moves over such period; and can be expected to continue in such status for an extended period of time because of chronic disabilities, chronic physical health or mental health conditions, substance addiction, histories of domestic violence or childhood abuse, the presence of a child or youth with a disability, or multiple barriers to employment."	**Yes, if the youth cannot live with relatives and has no other safe place to go:** "a youth… for whom it is not possible to live in a safe environment with a relative, and who has no other safe alternative living arrangement."

Source: Administration for Children and Families, US Department of Health and Human Services

	EDUCATION DEFINITION	HUD DEFINITION – PRIOR TO 2009	HUD DEFINITION – HEARTH ACT - CURRENT	RHYA DEFINITION
"At Risk of Homelessness"	**No such definition.**	**No such definition.**	**Defines "at risk of homelessness" to include all families with children and youth defined as homeless under other Federal statutes.** (1) AT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS.-The term `at risk of homelessness' means, with respect to an individual or family, that the individual or family- (A) has income below 30 percent of median income for the geographic area; (B) has insufficient resources immediately available to attain housing stability; and (C)(i) has moved frequently because of economic reasons; (ii) is living in the home of another because of economic hardship; (iii) has been notified that their right to occupy their current housing or living situation will be terminated; (iv) lives in a hotel or motel; (v) lives in severely overcrowded housing; (vi) is exiting an institution; or (vii) otherwise lives in housing that has characteristics associated with instability and an increased risk of homelessness. Such term includes all families with children and youth defined as homeless under other Federal statutes.	**No such definition. However, RHYA does define "youth at risk of separation from family:"** YOUTH AT RISK OF SEPARATION FROM THE FAMILY.—The term 'youth at risk of separation from the family' means an individual— (A) who is less than 18 years of age; and (B) (i) who has a history of running away from the family of such individual; (ii) whose parent, guardian, or custodian is not willing to provide for the basic needs of such individual; or (iii) who is at risk of entering the child welfare system or juvenile justice system as a result of the lack of services available to the family to meet such needs.

Source: Administration for Children and Families, US Department of Health and Human Services

Department of Commerce

Office of Homeless Youth

Date: September 2016

Background

The Office of Homeless Youth (OHY) in the Department of Commerce (department) works with partners and communities to establish ongoing and future funding, policy, and best practices to prevent and end youth homelessness in Washington state. The Office's work is guided by a 12 member advisory committee comprised of legislators, advocates, law enforcement and service providers. OHY funding is allocated to six areas, each with a targeted mission, working together to increase the well-being of youth and young adults in transition:

1. Crisis Residential Centers (CRCs) provide short-term, semi-secure, and secure facilities for runaway youth and adolescents in conflict with their families;
2. HOPE Centers provide temporary residential placements for homeless street youth under the age of 18;
3. Independent Youth Housing Program (IYHP) provides rental assistance and case management for eligible youth who have aged out of the state foster care system;
4. Street Youth Services (SYS) connect youth under the age of 18 to services and resources. Services can include drug/alcohol abuse intervention, counseling, emergency housing, prevention and education activities, employment skill building, advocacy, family focused services, and follow-up support;
5. The Young Adult Shelter (YAS) program provides emergency shelter beds to young adults age 18-24; and
6. The Young Adult Housing Program (YAHP) provides rental assistance and case management to homeless young adults age 18-24.

Expected Results and Providers

Expected results for OHY efforts include reduction in the count of homeless youth; reunification of youth with family whenever possible and appropriate; and an improvement in the safety and health of youth facing homelessness.

Some of the state's providers include the following entities:

Janus Youth Programs provides a continuum of services and housing support to homeless and runaway youth in Southwest Washington. Both CRC and HOPE beds are available through their crisis intervention shelters, where youth receive family reunification and mediation services, education, and referral services.

Volunteers of America in Eastern Washington provides Street Youth Services through its YouthREACH outreach program and Crosswalk drop-in center. Outreach staff identify and engage street youth, provide hygiene products, bus passes, resource booklets, as well as assessments, case management, and help navigating housing, education, and employment programs.

Catholic Family & Child Service delivers the Independent Youth Housing Program to former foster youth in Yakima, Benton, Franklin, Walla Walla, and Kittitas counties. Through the program, young adults receive rental assistance alongside skills training on employment, education, financial literacy, and other areas that help them maintain their housing as they exit the program.

2015 – 2017 Funding

Funding for the OHY includes General Fund State (GFS), GFS provisos, and the Home Security Account. In the 2015-2017 enacted budget, about $1 million in funding for Street Youth Services and $10.7 million for HOPE Beds, and CRCs were transferred from DSHS to the department. The enacted FY16 Supplemental Budget included the following:

- $800,000 in additional funds for Street Youth Services;
- $1,028,000 in additional funds for an increase in HOPE beds;
- $714,000 in additional funds for an increase in CRC beds;
- $420,000 for Young Adult Shelter beds; and
- $787,000 in the Consolidated Homeless Grant targeted for homeless youth. This funding supports the Young Adult Housing Program.

Lastly, an additional $1million was added to support homeless students.

Contact

Kim Justice
Executive Director, Office of Homeless Youth
(360) 725-5055
kim.justice@commerce.wa.gov

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Counties	Agency	Phone Number	Website	Address	Street Youth Services	HOPE	Crisis Residential Center	Secure Crisis Residential Center	Young Adult Shelter	Young Adult Housing Program	Independent Youth Housing Program
Benton, Franklin	Benton-Franklin CAC	509.545.4042	www.bfcac.org	720 West Court Street, Pasco, WA 99301						x	
Chelan	Chelan County Juvenile Detention Center	509.667.6350	www.co.chelan.wa.us	316 Washington St #202 Wenatchee, WA							
Clallam	Clallam County Juvenile Detention Center	360.417.2282	www.clallam.net	1912 W 18th Street, Port Angeles, WA							
Clark, Cowlitz	Janus Youth Programs	503.233.6090	www.janusyouth.org	Mailing: 707 NE Couch St., Portland, OR // Physical: 2924 Falk Rd., Vancouver, WA	x	x	x				
Cowlitz	Lower Columbia CAP	360.425.3430	www.lowercolumbiacap.org	1526 Commerce Ave, Longview, WA 98632						x	
Island	Ryan's House	360.331.4575	www.ryanshouseforyouth.org	Mailing: P.O. Box 551 Langley, WA 98260 // Physical: 1832 Scott Rd C-F, Freeland WA 98249	x						
King	Auburn Youth Resources	Outreach Services: 253.939.2202 // Drop In: 253.350.2802	www.ayr4kids.org	1000 Auburn Way South, Auburn, WA 98002	x						
King	Friends of Youth	425.869-6490	www.friendsofyouth.org	13116 NE 132nd St. Kirkland, WA 98034		x					
King	Multi - Service Center	253.838.6810	www.mschelps.org	Mailing: PO Box 23669, Federal Way, WA 98093 // Phsyical: 1200 S. 336th Federal Way, WA 98003						x	
King	Pioneer Human Services	206.587.0992	www.pioneerhumanservices.org	1101 East Spruce Street, Seattle, WA			x				
King	ROOTS	206.632.1635	www.rootsinfo.org	1415 NE 43rd St, Seattle, WA 98105					x		
King	YMCA of Greater Seattle	206.382.5013	www.seattleymca.org	909 Fourth Ave, Seattle, WA 98104							x
King	YouthCare	206.694.4500 // 800.495.7802	www.youthcare.org	2500 NE 54th St, Seattle, WA	x	x					
Kitsap	Coffee Oasis	360.377.5560	www.thecoffeeoasis.com	837 4th St., Bremerton, WA 98337	x				x		
Pend Oreille	Youth Emergency Services	509.447.1125		316 W 2nd St. Newport, WA 99156	x			x			
Pierce	Pierce County Alliance	253.572.4750	www.piercecountyalliance.org	510 Tacoma Ave S, 510 Tacoma Ave S, Tacoma, WA 98402							x
Snohomish	Cocoon House	425.259.5802	www.cocoonhouse.org	2929 Pine St, Everett, WA	x	x					
Snohomish	Service Alternatives	360.652.6830	www.servalt.com	Mailing: 617 148th St NE, Arlington, WA // Physical: 210 N Oak St. Burlington, WA		x	x				
Spokane	City of Spokane	509.755.2489	www.my.spokanecity.org	808 W. Spokane Falls Blvd., Spokane, WA 99201						x	
Spokane	Volunteers of America	509.624.2378	www.voaspokane.org	524 W 2nd Ave, Spokane, WA	x						x
Spokane	YFA Connections	509.624.2868	www.yfaconnections.org	22 S Thor St, Spokane, WA		x	x				
Thurston, Lewis, Mason, Pierce	Community Youth Services	360.943.0780 // 888.698.1816	www.communityyouthservices.org	711 State Ave NE, Olympia, WA	x	x	x		x		x
Walla Walla	Walla Walla County Department of Court Services	509.524.2800 // 509.382.2200	www.co.walla-walla.wa.us	Mailing: PO Box 1754 // Physical: 455 W. Rose Street, Walla Walla, WA	x						
Whatcom, Skagit	Northwest Youth Services	Skagit 360.336.1988 Whatcom 360.734.9862	www.nwys.org	1020 N State St, Bellingham, WA		x			x	x	
Yakima	Ohana Crisis Center	509.457.8835	n/a	PO Box 679, Yakima WA 98907		x	x				
Yakima, Benton, Franklin, Walla Walla, Kittitas	Catholic Family & Child Service	509.965.7100 // 800.246.2962	www.cfcsyakima.org	5301 Tieton Drive, Suite C, Yakima, WA 98908						x	x

Street Youth Services

Street Youth Services focus on identification and engagement with youth under the age of 18 who are living on the street. Programs provide needed services directly or link the youth to appropriate community resources. Services can include drug/alcohol abuse intervention, counseling, emergency housing, prevention and education activities, employment skill building, advocacy, family focused services, and follow-up support.

HOPE Centers

Temporary residence, assessment, referrals, and permanency planning services for street youth under the age of 18.

Crisis Residential Centers

Temporary residence, assessment, referrals, and permanency planning services provided in semi-secure and secure facilities for youth ages 12 to 17 who are in conflict with their family, have run away from home, or whose health and safety is at risk.

Young Adult Shelter

Emergency, temporary shelter, assessment, referrals, and permanency planning services for young adults ages 18 through 24.

Young Adult Housing Program

Rent assistance, transitional housing, and case management for young adults ages 18 through 24.

Independent Youth Housing Program

Rental assistance and case management for young adults ages 18 and 23 years old who have aged out of foster care.

APPENDIX D: YOUTH ADVOCATES RECOMMENDATIONS

Mockingbird Youth Programs

The Mockingbird Youth Network (MYN) is a powerful statewide coalition of young people affected by foster care. The MYN brings together young people who have experienced the child-welfare system first-hand and want to share their stories so tomorrow's foster youth will not have to face the same challenges.

Youth Advocates Ending Homelessness (YAEH) gives young people who have experienced homelessness a chance to speak up, tell their stories, and advocate for programs and services they think will improve the lives of young people who do not have a stable home.

2016 Youth Advocacy Proposals

YAKIMA MYN CHAPTER

Topic: Legal Representation for All Children and Youth in Foster Care

The Yakima Chapter wants all children and youth in foster care to be provided legal counsel before their 72-hour shelter care hearings. Attorneys can ensure that young people are aware of their rights, make legal terms more understandable, and allow their voices to be heard in court. In a recent study, experts in King County found that 22 percent of youth represented by an attorney at the 72-hour hearing were never found dependent, and 48 percent never spent a night in foster care. Currently, not all youth are assigned attorneys in Washington state. Whether or not they are represented by an attorney often depends on the county where they reside. This justice by geography is fundamentally unfair. By providing attorneys for all young people before shelter care hearings, we can increase their rates of permanency, and therefore create better outcomes.

APPENDIX D: YOUTH ADVOCATES RECOMMENDATIONS

TACOMA MYN CHAPTER

Topic: Eliminating Youth Detention for Status Offenses and Expanding Family Reconciliation Services

The Tacoma Chapter wants to eliminate use of the Valid Court Order Exception in Washington state that allows juvenile detention for status offenses. In addition, the Chapter is advocating for funding to restore and expand the Family Reconciliation Services program to prevent juvenile detention and provide families with supportive alternatives. Status offenses only apply to youth under 18, and punish young people for actions like running away or breaking curfew. Washington detains youth for status offenses more than any other state in the country. Studies have found that juvenile detention usually increases the severity of problem behaviors and can increase the chances that the youth will be detained or incarcerated in the future. Juvenile detention can also worsen mental illness and put youth at greater risk for self-harm. By prioritizing early intervention and reconciliation, and eliminating the practice of detaining minors for status offenses, the state could save money and ensure better outcomes for at-risk youth and their families.

YOUTH ADVOCATES ENDING HOMELESSNESS CHAPTER

Topic: Educational Supports for Students Experiencing Homelessness

The Youth Advocates Ending Homelessness (YAEH) Chapter wants to improve high school graduation rates for students experiencing homelessness or housing instability by ensuring there is 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. Furthermore, the Chapter proposes the state guarantee supplemental instruction and services to these students under the state's definition of basic education. Experts estimate there are over 8,800 unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness or housing instability in Washington's schools. These youths are more likely to fare worse on standardized tests, are disproportionally individuals of color, and are 240 percent more likely to drop out of school. Only 30 out of 295 school districts in Washington receive federal McKinney-Vento funding intended to meet the needs of homeless students, which YAEH members believe is insufficient. By providing funding for a point person in every school and prioritizing the needs of homeless students alongside other vulnerable student populations, the state can better provide youth the supports and tools they need to graduate at an equal rate with their stably housed peers.

APPENDIX D: YOUTH ADVOCATES RECOMMENDATIONS

SEATTLE MYN CHAPTER

Topic: Partial Credits for Unresolved Coursework Due to Foster Care Placement Transfers

The Seattle Chapter wants to improve high school graduation rates for youth in foster care by awarding partial credit for unresolved coursework. Experts estimate that every time a young person in care changes placements, they lose six months of academic progress. Given that each youth in foster care goes through an average of three placement changes, on average they fall eighteen months behind their peers in school. Only fifty percent of foster youth graduate high school. Youth who drop out of high school are more likely to be unemployed, live in poverty, and have poor health outcomes. They are also three times more likely than high school graduates to be arrested. By awarding partial credit to students when they transfer to a new school mid-term, foster youth can lose less ground due to placement changes and improve their chances to be on a path to success in school and life.

OLYMPIA MYN CHAPTER

Topic: Access to Driver's Permits and Licenses for Foster Youth

The Olympia Chapter wants to implement a statewide program that will make it easier for foster youth to obtain driver's licenses and permits. Having the ability to drive expands the opportunities for foster youth to pursue employment and education. This is especially true in rural areas and smaller towns or cities where there may be limited public transportation. For foster youth, being able to drive also promotes a sense of normalcy, and allows them to participate in a wider range of activities. Currently, the costs and administrative processes related to obtaining a driver's license and insurance present barriers for youth in care. A Florida study of youth in foster care found that only three percent youth in foster care under age 18 had driver's licenses, compared to 54 percent of their peers who were not in care. By implementing a program that would reduce the paperwork burden and pay all of the fees associated with driver's education, licensing, and insurance for foster youth, our state could help ensure they are on the road to successful independence.

APPENDIX D: YOUTH ADVOCATES RECOMMENDATIONS

SPOKANE MYN CHAPTER

Topic: Comprehensive Sexual Education for Youth in Foster Care

The Spokane Chapter wants foster youth to have access to comprehensive sex education to prevent unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Youth in foster care engage in sexual activity at higher rates than their counterparts from intact families. They also become pregnant and experience STIs more often than their peers who are not in care. The Alliance for Child Welfare Excellence does not currently offer any specific training for foster parents or social workers about how to discuss sexual health with youth, and not all community-based service providers offer sex education programs. By training foster parents and state social workers, and providing sexual education curriculum to Independent Living Program service providers, foster youth will have the best opportunity to learn what healthy relationships look like and how to make good decisions about sexual health and family planning.

EVERETT MYN CHAPTER

Topic: Addressing the Foster Parent Crisis and Implementing the Mockingbird Family Model

The Everett Chapter wants a new Mockingbird Family Model (MFM) constellation to be implemented in the Everett region, with an emphasis on recruiting foster parents who want to care for adolescents. Chapter members recognize the difference that dedicated foster parents make in their lives, and they believe the MFM is the best way to empower caregivers to do their jobs in a supported, sustainable way. In every MFM constellation, six to ten licensed foster families live in close proximity to a veteran foster care family – called a Hub Home – that provides peer support, social activities, planned and unplanned respite or crisis care, and assistance in navigating the child welfare system. Early evaluations showed how the MFM improved rates of child safety, permanency, placement stability, sibling connection, culturally relevant care, and caregiver retention. In the Everett region, there were only 46 licensed foster homes to serve 300 youth in crisis in 2014. Without enough options, youth might be placed in an institutional setting, or outside of their home community. They might also be moved from place to place until something more permanent becomes available. The Chapter wants to avoid those negative outcomes, and instead provide youth and caregivers with the support they need to thrive.

PRIORITY AREA	INDICATOR	Time frame	STATEWIDE	Under 18	18-24 years old	White	Youth of color	African-American / Black	Asian	Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	American Indian or Alaska Native	Multiracial	Latino	DK/R/M Race or Ethnicity	LGBTQ
	Exits to safe & stable housing	CY 2015	43%	56%	41%	45%	46%	46%	43%	38%	41%	46%	48%	30%	43%
	Number of new homeless from DSHS	PIT 2016	825	9	816	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
STABLE HOUSING	Returns to homelessness within 24 months	Only 18-24 Exiting 2013 to PH Entering 2014-15 into housing	14%	NA	14%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Length of time in a program	CY 2015	136 days	35 days	170 days	143 days	139 days	161 days	205 days	126 days	88 days	157 days	117 days	82 days	85 days
	Percent in PIT who are unsheltered (2016 PIT count: parenting & unnaccompanied under 25)	PIT 2016	32% (705/2228) of YYA in PIT are unsheltered; 8% (705/8340) of total unsheltered pop are YYA	10%	90%	66%	34%	12%	2%	1%	6%	12%	15%	NA	NA
FAMILY REUNIFICATION	Number of youth reunited with family	CY 2015	47%	47%	NA	49%	44%	43%	*	*	45%	32%	46%	*	47%
PERMANENT CONNECTIONS	Number who have a consistent case manager until stable housing is achieved	NA	Data collected via client survey, to-be-developed												
	Number who can identify an adult they have a positive, healthy relationship with	NA	Data collected via client survey, to-be-developed												
EDUCATION	Number enrolled and attending school	CY 2015	54%	62%	33%	51%	56%	41%	67%	60%	67%	69%	59%	55%	47%
	Self- sufficiency matrix outcomes	SFY 16	Improved Economic Self-Sufficiency: 60% Increased Life Skills: 54% Improved Circumstances: 58%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	High school graduation rates	NA	Data for unnaccompanied youth unavailable until 2017												
	Academic testing scores	NA	Data for unnaccompanied youth unavailable until 2017												
	Number with absenteeism, expulsions, suspensions, truancy	NA	Data for unnaccompanied youth unavailable until 2017												
EMPLOYMENT	For exited Youth, Percent who gained employment during project stay	CY 2015	2%	0%	2%	1%	3%	6%	0%	0%	2%	0%	3%	0%	0%
	Availability of work and training opportunities	NA	Data collected via client survey, to-be-developed												
	Percent of Youth with employment at entry	CY 2015	23%	3%	27%	20%	29%	41%	35%	28%	18%	15%	24%	10%	13%
	Percent of Youth with employment at exit	CY 2015	38%	10%	43%	30%	46%	52%	27%	43%	50%	17%	46%	35%	9%
SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING	Percent of Youth with health insurance at entry	CY 2015	37%	39%	37%	53%	26%	14%	14%	33%	44%	25%	41%	30%	15%
	Percent of Youth with health insurance at exit	CY 2015	46%	50%	45%	58%	34%	21%	20%	42%	46%	33%	49%	46%	4%
	For exited Youth, Percent who obtained health insurance during project stay	CY 2015	5%	8%	5%	4%	2%	1%	0%	4%	2%	1%	5%	16%	0%
	Physical Disablity or General Health Status less than "Good" at Entry	CY 2015	15%	8%	17%	19%	14%	14%	11%	12%	12%	16%	13%	8%	33%
	MH/Substance Abuse or Mental Health Status less than "Good" at Entry	CY 2015	25%	31%	27%	31%	22%	25%	38%	13%	17%	26%	20%	11%	41%
	Number of opportunities for clients to participate in program planning and policy development	NA	Data collected via client survey, to-be-developed												

* Data suppressed if fewer than 5 individuals in the denominator

Indicator	Timeframe/ other details	Definition
Exits to safe & stable housing	CY 2015	Data element 3.11. Of those exited in CY 2015 from a homeless housing program, including Emergency Shelters, Transitional Housing, Permanent Housing (all types), Rapid Rehousing, or Homelessness Prevention, how many went to a safe and stable housing situation according to their HMIS data record for their last or only exit in the year according to data element 3.12. The safe and stable destinations include: Foster care, long term care facility or nursing home, moved from one HOPWA funded project to HOPWA PH, moved from one HOPWA funded project to HOPWA TH, owned by client with or without a subsidy, permanent supportive housing, rental by client with or without a subsidy, residential project or halfway house, Safe Haven, staying or living with friends or family for a permanent tenure, or transitional housing project.
Number of new homeless from DSHS	At a point in time of January 2016	Of those counted as homeless in the given report month according the the Automated Client Eligibility System (ACES) at DSHS (indicated by a flag of "homeless without housing"), how many didn't have the flag in the month prior to the data pull, in this case January 2016. Count includes child-only households, parenting teen households, and ages 18-24 without children; includes homeless and unstably housed.
Returns to homelessness within 24 months	Only those with identifiers, and only includes 18-24 due to minor consent issues	Of those exited to a safe and stable housing situation in calendar year 2013, how many have returned to a homeless housing program, including Emergency Shelters, Transitional Housing, Permanent Housing (all types)or Rapid Rehousing in the two calendar years following their exit.
Length of time in a program	CY 2015	Data elements 3.10 & 3.11. Of those exited in CY 2015 from a homeless housing program, including Emergency Shelters, Transitional Housing, Permanent Housing (all types), Rapid Rehousing, or Homelessness Prevention, how many days were they, on average, in that program, according to their HMIS data record for their last or only exit in the year. People exited from night-by-night shelters were not included in this result.
Percent in PIT who are unsheltered (2016 PIT count: parenting & unnaccompanied under 25))	On the last Thursday of each January	How many unsheltered youth and young adults were counted in local point in time counts during the last Thursday of January in 2016. Includes homeless individuals under age 25, including parenting youth and their children. Local count methodologies vary; please contact local jurisdiction lead PIT Coordinators for further detail.
Number of youth reunited with family	CY 2015	Data element 4.38 Family reunification achieved. At project exit, for RHY funded projects only, include only those with an answer filled in, and out of those how many said "yes" to the question "Was family reunification achieved?"
Number enrolled and attending school	CY 2015	Data element 4.25 School status. For RHY funded projects only and those with an answer to the question, how many answered "attending school regularly." Excluded records where youth already graduated or obtained GED.
Self- sufficiency matrix outcomes	SFY 16	Outcomes from the SSM; the number who increase their outcomes from start to finish in the specified domains. Only applies to IYHP clients.
Of exited youth, percent who obtained employment during project stay	CY 2015	Data element 4.26 Employment status and 4.2 Income and Sources. Of those with an answer of no at entry, how many said "Yes" at exit or have earned income at exit.
Of exited youth, percent who gained health insurance during project stay	CY 2015	Data element 4.2 Income & Sources. Of those with an answer of no at entry, how many said "Yes" at exit
Percent of Youth with employment at entry		Data Elements 4.26 and 4.2. Of those with an answer, how many are employed at entry.
Percent of Youth with employment at exit		Data Elements 4.26 and 4.2. Of those with an answer, how many are employed at exit.
Percent of Youth with health insurance at entry		Data element 4.2. Of those with an answer, how many are covered by health insurance at entry.
Percent of Youth with health insurance at exit		Data element 4.2. Of those with an answer, how many are covered by health insurance at exit.
Mental health or substance abuse issue	CY 2015	Data elements 4.9 & 4.10. Of those with an answer, how many said "Yes" at entry. Or Reported a Mental Health Status of less than "good" for element 4.29
Other health (physical, developmental or chronic) issue	CY 2015	Data elements 4.5, 4.6, 4.7. Of those with an answer, how many said "Yes" at entry. Or Reported a General Health Status of less than "good" for element 4.27.

Office of Homeless Youth Advisory Committee
Electronic mail vote to endorse 2016 OHY Report to the Governor and Legislature

On October 24th, 2016, Casey Trupin, chair of the committee, invited members to take action to endorse the 2016 Office of Homeless Youth report to the Governor and Legislature via electronic mail voting. The committee was given until Friday, 5pm PT, October 28th for discussion, voting, and changing of votes via electronic mail. A motion to endorse the report was made by Katara Jordan and seconded by Kris Hermanns. The motion to endorse passed 11-1. The vote tally is below:

Vote	Date	Committee member	
Yes	10/27/2016	Vicente	Acosta
Yes	10/25/2016	Kim	Bogucki
Yes	10/24/2016	Bridget	Cannon
Yes	10/25/2016	Jake	Fey
Yes	10/28/2016	David	Frockt
Yes	10/24/2016	Melinda	Giovengo
Yes	10/27/2016	Kris	Hermanns
Yes	10/25/2016	Katara	Jordan
Yes	10/25/2016	Linda	Kochmar
No	10/25/2016	Mark	Miloscia
Yes	10/27/2016	Sierra	Phillips
Yes	10/26/2016	Casey	Trupin

Washington State Senate

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Comments of Senator Mark Miloscia

I initially greeted the prospect of serving on the Office of Homeless Youth Prevention and Protection Programs Advisory Board with great enthusiasm. I helped sponsor and support the passage of SB 5404, the bill that created the Office of Homeless Youth Prevention and Protection Programs within the Department of Commerce. Our goal was to help homeless youth get off the streets, reconcile with their families, and, where necessary, be provided with appropriate services by creating an entity that would consolidate and coordinate efforts to serve homeless youth throughout the state.

Despite my enthusiasm for the cause of helping homeless youth, I have reservations regarding the proposed report from the Office of Homeless Youth Prevention and Protection Programs Advisory Board that has led me to cast a "no" vote on endorsing the report. Specifically, I do not believe that the report does enough to ensure that there is sufficient accountability and measurement of outcomes throughout homeless youth programs, which can lead to poor outcomes that we are in essence powerless to fix, as we do not have enough information what about how well individual programs are actually working.

Furthermore, there are serious gaps in our system that need to be addressed. For example, it recently came to light that there appears to be unlicensed homes for homeless youth operated by local agencies in partnership with a school district. While I whole heartedly support ending homelessness and supporting our homeless students, I am deeply concerned that unlicensed homes continue to exist and that he safety of these youth may be at risk. I also have reservations about the lack of separation between youth and young adults and am concerned that the two populations are being comingled without appropriate services necessarily being provided to each.

While providing services to homeless youth is an important aspect of homeless youth programs, the emphasis should be first and foremost on providing more robust family reconciliation services. Every effort should be made to reconcile youth with their family of origin, or proceed with a petition for dependency if necessary. Furthermore, despite the well-intentioned input from various other members of the Advisory Board, it is also my feeling that the Advisory Board lacks the ideological diversity in its membership that would have ensured a robust, thoughtful discussion of the issues at hand, and instead has become essentially a tool to validate the Executive Branch's goals in this area.

For these reasons, while I appreciate the time and hard work that all members of the Advisory Board have invested in this report, I must respectfully cast my vote as "no" in hopes that we can make changes to the Office of Homeless Youth Prevention and Protection Programs to adequately reflect my concerns.

Sincerely,

Senator Mark Miloscia
30th Legislative District

OFFICE OF HOMELESS YOUTH
PREVENTION & PROTECTION PROGRAMS
2016 REPORT

December, 2016
www.commerce.wa.org

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Department of Commerce