

Homeless Youth Coalition

subcommittees



Community Awareness

Develop channels for making the community at large, faith-based organizations, teachers and public and private agencies aware of the youth homelessness--its causes and available services for homeless youth. Work with the overall *Destination: Home Awareness Team* in community awareness efforts.

CONTACT: Bobbi Bell Bobbi.Bell@evsc.k12.in.us 499-0728

TARGETS:

Recommendation #11

The federal government's Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 created the John Chafee Foster Care Independence program (*Midwest Evaluation, p. 1*) Through this program, Chafee funds are available for youth aging out of foster care; however, many of these youth are unaware of the availability of these funds and other services.

We propose increased dissemination of information on this program to youth who visit existing service providers that serve adults.

Recommendation #12

Through its McKinney-Vento grant, the Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation (EVSC) provides a number of valuable services to homeless youth. We recommend building partnerships to augment the EVSC's work to provide supplemental services to homeless youth that the EVSC cannot currently provide or may not be able to provide in the future if grant dollars are removed. We further recommend collaboration with local organizations to seek ways to remove barriers to accessing those services.

Recommendation #13

To help our area more fully understand the causes, issues, unique challenges and necessary services related to youth homelessness, we recommend development of a public awareness campaign that would be coordinated with the *Destination: Home Awareness Team*. In addition to general public awareness efforts, we recommend development of information designed specifically for youth who are experiencing or are at risk of homelessness, social services agencies, the faith community, funders, businesses/employers, educators, legislators and other lawmakers, and the courts.

As awareness is raised, avenues for concerned individuals/groups to take action through coordinated service delivery should be created.

Legislation

Research existing climate (including licensing, funding and other issues.) Make recommendations on needed state and federal legislation, monitor its progress and coordinate HYC advocacy efforts.

CONTACT: Patty Avery patty.avery@oldnational.com 465-7278

TARGETS:

- Research current related legislation & inform HYC
- Assess needs that tie with legislation & formulate recommendations for legislators
- Inform HYC members of opportunities to advocate for homeless youth through contact with legislators

Services

Document existing services available to homeless youth and create documentation of our existing continuum of care. Develop and propose plans for the proposed drop-in center/emergency shelter and permanent supportive housing. Communicate relevant plans and information with the Commission on Homelessness' Housing Committee.

CONTACT: Mandy Gregory bellof76@gmail.com

TARGETS:

Recommendation #8

We recommend the development of a center that includes both outreach services and emergency shelter. *Destination: Home* recommends the creation of a one-stop assessment center for the community, and we recommend coordinating the youth center's assessment services with that planned assessment center. Models implemented in other communities include mobile outreach teams, 24-hour drop-in centers, and short-term emergency shelter. Successful models stress the importance of providing a safe, nurturing environment with access to health care, mental health and substance abuse services, and educational and vocational opportunities.

Recommendation #9

Destination: Home shifts the community's emphasis from temporary homeless shelters to permanent housing. Just as life in a shelter's care should only be short-term for adults and families, youth for whom family reconciliation is not feasible need the same opportunity for access to permanent housing. For that reason, we recommend the development of permanent supportive housing for youth ages 16 - 21 with intensive case management, and for older youth or young adults (those over 21) in accord with the principles of adult permanent supportive housing models.

Recommendation #10

We recommend increased coordination with our local WorkOne and youth-serving organizations that will result in improved access to educational opportunities and employment skills training.

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Prevention

Document existing services that address the causes of youth homelessness, work with Community Awareness subcommittee to promote awareness in these programs of their role in preventing youth homelessness. Communicate with the Commission on Homelessness' Prevention Committee and the Discharge Planning Coalition.

CONTACT: Lyneve Scott ls178@evansville.edu

TARGETS:

Recommendation #3

We further recommend that a housing risk assessment tool be developed relevant to youth and useful to youth-serving agencies in discussing housing needs and options.

Recommendation #4

Recognizing that family conflict is cited as a primary cause of youth homelessness, we recommend strengthening existing community programs designed to strengthen parenting skills as well as raise awareness of and address abuse and neglect issues.

Recommendation #5

We recommend increasing coordination of these services and expanding programs to serve in crisis intervention situations. For example, we support and encourage strong mentoring programs that create stable role models for parents and youth.

Recommendation #6

Stable family housing promotes both healthier family dynamics and school attendance; unstable housing has been cited as an indicator of future youth homelessness. For that reason, we affirm the goals outlined in *Destination: Home – a Ten-Year Journey to End Homelessness in Evansville and Vanderburgh County* that call for an increase in the stock of affordable housing for families.

Recommendation #7

We recommend that members of our council work with the Discharge Planning Coalition in planning for youth aging out of the foster care system and those released from juvenile detention centers (locally and regionally) and child caring institutions. We support the recommendations of the Indiana General Assembly's Interim Study Committee on Missing and Homeless Children regarding state and local coordination to better provide information on services and educational opportunities for youth aging out of foster care.

Data Collection

In conjunction with the Homeless Services Council's Data Committee, determine types of information needed and channels for including relevant data in HMIS (Hoosier Management Information System). Data gathered will be made available to other groups working on various aspects of *Destination: Home* strategies including youth homelessness.

CONTACT: Cynthia Smith cynthiasmith9868@yahoo.com

TARGETS: (HYC liaison to work with the HSCSI's Data Committee – meets 2nd Fri. of odd months; 8:15 a.m.)

Recommendation #1

We recommend that unaccompanied youth be counted as separate individuals and entered into the Hoosier Management Information System (HMIS) as "head of household."

Recommendation #2

In addition, we recommend that youth-serving agencies collect and share data with HMIS system staff in order to create a better mechanism for tracking the number of youth in the county who are homeless or at risk for homelessness.

**Homeless Youth Coalition meetings are held bi-monthly (even months)
with subcommittee meetings held in the odd months**

For more information or to get involved, contact
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Cynthia Smith at cynthiasmith9868@yahoo.com

www.destination-home.info/hyc.htm