

TOO
BIG
TO IGNORE

TEN YEARS LATER

A MULTI-YEAR POLICY AGENDA
TO ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS
AMONG CALIFORNIA'S YOUTH



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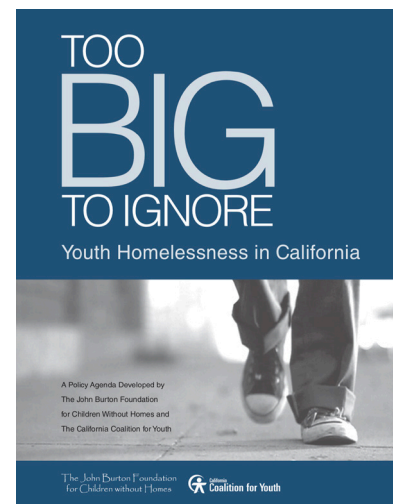
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INTRODUCTION

Ten years ago, John Burton Advocates for Youth and the California Coalition for Youth released a groundbreaking publication on youth homelessness, *Too Big to Ignore: Youth Homelessness in California*. With the goal of challenging society’s complacency on the issue, the report posed important but rarely asked questions about youth homelessness: How does a young person, who has not fully entered adulthood, end up without a safe, stable place to live? Where are their parents, the schools, their extended family, the social safety net? What could have caused such a massive failure to occur so early in a young person’s life? How can we stop accepting homelessness among youth and begin responding as if they were our own children?



One thing was clear: We could do better. Ten years later, the same must be said. And given the realities we now face, the need to do better is more urgent than ever before. In 2017, the first-ever national estimate of the prevalence of youth homelessness was released, finding that one in 30 minors—approximately 700,000—had experienced homelessness over a 12-month period and one in ten 18- to 25-year-olds (3.5 million).¹ Over the past decade, California has entered a full-blown housing crisis, with the median cost of renting a two-bedroom apartment increasing 47 percent since 2010.² This has had numerous negative impacts, including the emergence of a sizable population of homeless college students. Further threatening our tenuous progress is a looming recession and retrenchment on the federal level.

Despite these challenges, we must remain committed to ending youth homelessness in California. This report revisits the solutions identified ten years ago and proposes a new agenda to address the realities we face today. It focuses on preventing youth from becoming homeless in the first place and scaling solutions that get youth off the streets and keep them safely housed. We look at strategies that address the needs of youth at various stages of homelessness, including: children who are kicked out or run away from their homes and are episodically homeless; those who have run from or “aged out” of the child welfare or juvenile probation systems; those who have experienced homelessness for longer periods and often live on the street; and those who experience homelessness as college students.

As there is no single solution, the intention of this report is to create a menu of options to address youth homelessness. The issue is complex and distinct from adult homelessness, with family disruption being a leading factor. Youth also require significant social supports to exit homelessness. Given this and the diversity of young people’s experiences, we must commit to developing a continuum of responses.

1 Morton, M.H., Dworsky, A., & Samuels, G.M. (2017). Missed opportunities: Youth homelessness in America. National estimates. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.

2 Zillow: Median rent price of a two-bedroom apartment as of September 2010 compared to September 2019. URL: <<https://www.zillow.com/research/data>>

REPORT STRUCTURE AND METHODOLOGY

The report begins by reviewing what has been accomplished since the 2009 release of *Too Big to Ignore*. These accomplishments are grouped into four categories: new funding, improved policy, strengthened practice, and better data. Following an overview of these accomplishments, the report outlines policy recommendations in the following four areas:

- » Resources and Funding Streams
- » Adjacent Systems and Access to Services
- » K-12 and Postsecondary Interactions and Interventions
- » Strengthening the Current Homeless Response System for Youth

Recommendations were developed based on in-depth interviews with 44 experts in the field, including non-profit organizations providing direct services to homeless youth, local homeless Continuums of Care, administrators of state funding, state advocacy organizations, national advocacy organizations and technical assistance providers, researchers, and state legislative staff members. Additionally, information was drawn from a review of the latest literature on youth homelessness. The strategies proposed in this report are achievable over the next five years and adoption of these strategies would make a significant difference in the lives of California's most vulnerable young people.

WHICH RECOMMENDATIONS WERE ACHIEVED FROM THE 2009 PUBLICATION, *TOO BIG TO IGNORE*?

ACCOMPLISHED

- » Develop alternative regulations for California's Basic Center Programs to sustain Runaway and Homeless Youth Act Funding.
- » Extend the upper age limit of foster care to age 21.

SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS

- » Build the capacity of homeless youth providers to apply for local, state, and federal funding.
- » Increase access to SSI for homeless youth with disabilities.
- » Utilize the State Interagency Team for Children and Youth as the primary body for addressing youth homelessness at the state level.
- » Include the needs of transition-age youth in the creation of a permanent source for housing development.
- » Expand THP-Plus to serve three out of five eligible foster youth.
- » Expand the Family Unification Program to better meet the needs of homeless, transition-age youth.
- » Pursue a research agenda on homeless youth.
- » Expand California's investment and expertise in youth homelessness prevention.

LITTLE OR NO PROGRESS

- » Better accommodate homeless youth whose circumstances meet the legal definition of abuse and neglect in the foster care system.
- » Increase appropriations for the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act to \$165 million and advocate for California to receive its portion of funding.

ADDRESSING YOUTH HOMELESSNESS & THE NEEDS OF HOMELESS YOUTH WHAT HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED IN THE LAST TEN YEARS?



While the issue of youth homelessness is more serious than ever, since *Too Big to Ignore* was released in 2009 California has adopted important policy changes to address the issue. Below is a summary of key developments in California and nationwide over the last ten years.

NEW FUNDING

- ✓ **Creation of federal pilot program:** In 2016, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) launched the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) to develop and execute a coordinated community approach to preventing and ending youth homelessness. The initial \$33 million award was granted to ten communities. YHDP was expanded to \$43 million awarded to 11 communities in 2018 and \$75 million to 22 communities in 2019. Three of the funded communities are located in California: San Francisco, San Diego, and Santa Cruz.
- ✓ **Moving young parents out of poverty:** In 2016, California increased the “infant supplement” paid to young parents in foster care from \$411 to \$900 per month, lifting these young families out of poverty and strengthening their ability to remain stably housed. As of July 1, 2019, there were 896 custodial parents in out-of-home placement in California.³
- ✓ **Creation of Office of Emergency Services (OES) pilot programs:** In 2016 and 2017, two new pilot programs were created in the OES to address the needs of homeless youth: the Homeless Youth Emergency Services Pilot Program (HY) and the Homeless Youth Emergency Services and Housing Pilot Program (YE). The HY program provides \$10 million over five years for services in El Dorado, Fresno, Orange, and San Bernardino Counties, through April 2020. The YE program provides \$10 million over three years to address homelessness in San Francisco, Santa Clara, San Diego, and Los Angeles Counties.
- ✓ **Youth set-aside in state homelessness funding:** In both FY 2018-19 and FY 2019-20, the California State Legislature required that local jurisdictions spend a portion of one-time state funding to address homelessness among youth. In the 2018-19 budget, the 43 Continuums of Care (CoCs) and 11 large cities that received funding were required to spend at least five percent of a total allocation of \$500 million on homeless youth. In 2019-20, the funded CoCs, counties, and large cities are required to use at least eight percent of a total allocation of \$650 million on youth. Together, these will result in a minimum \$77 million investment to address youth homelessness in California.
- ✓ **First-ever investment in homeless college students:** In the 2019-20 state budget, the California State Legislature included a

3 Webster, D., Lee, S., Dawson, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Putnam-Hornstein, E., Wiegmann, W., Saika, G., Chambers, J., Hammond, I., Sandoval, A., Benton, C., Hoerl, C., Yee, H., Flamson, T., Hunt, J., Carpenter, W., Casillas, E., & Gonzalez, A. (2019). CCWIP reports. Retrieved 10/9/2019, from University of California at Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project website. URL: <http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare>

\$19 million annual investment to address homelessness among college students. Nine million dollars will be directed to the community colleges, \$6.5 million to campuses of the California State University (CSU), and \$3.5 million to campuses of the University of California (UC).

✓ **\$8 million to assist former foster youth:**

In 2019, the California State Legislature approved an \$8 million annual appropriation in the state budget to address homelessness among former foster youth. The funding will be directed to county child welfare agencies, with the goal of expanding access to the Transitional Housing Placement Plus (THP-Plus) program. This additional funding will provide safe, affordable housing and supportive services to approximately 267 otherwise homeless former foster youth annually, together with their estimated 85 children.



between ages 17 and 19, including housing; education; criminal justice involvement; economic hardship and food insecurity; physical and mental health; sexuality, sexually transmitted diseases, and pregnancy; and receipt of services and support.⁵

IMPROVED POLICY

- ✓ **Foster care extended to age 21:** In 2010, the California State Legislature passed Assembly Bill (AB) 12 (Beall), extending foster care to age 21. AB 12 created two new placements: Transitional Housing Placement for Non-Minor Dependents (THP-NMD) and the Supervised Independent Living Placement (SILP). Implementation of extended foster care began in 2012 and was complete by 2014. As of July 1, 2019, a total of 8,411 youth ages 18 to 21 were participating in extended foster care.⁴ Prior to 2012, youth aged out of the foster care system at 18 years old. Research on extended foster care in California has found that youth who were in foster care at age 19 had better outcomes across almost every variable measured than those who elected to exit care

- ✓ **First federal strategy to address youth homelessness:** In 2011, the federal United States Interagency Council on Homelessness issued *Opening Doors*, the nation's first comprehensive strategy to prevent and end homelessness. The plan was updated in 2012 to include steps to be taken to assist unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness. Prior to this revision, the topic of youth homelessness was often excluded from larger policy efforts focused on addressing homelessness.
- ✓ **License for Runaway and Homeless Youth Shelters:** In 2013, the California State Legislature adopted AB 346 (Stone), which created a new licensing category for shelters named "Runaway and Homeless Youth Shelters." Prior to this policy change, the group home licensing category was the

4 Ibid.

5 Courtney, M. E., Okpych, N. J., Charles, P., Mikell, D., Stevenson, B., Park, K., Kindle, B., Harty, J., & Feng, H. (2016). Findings from the California Youth Transitions to Adulthood Study (CalYOUTH): Conditions of foster youth at age 19. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago

only available option for shelters for minors, which required parental consent and other stipulations that were not aligned with the goals of many youth shelters. Since then, 11 organizations have been licensed under this category.

- ✓ **Education improvements for homeless students:** In 2013, the legislature adopted Senate Bill (SB) 177 (Liu), which extended policies to homeless students that had previously applied only to foster youth. These include authorizing homeless students to be immediately enrolled in school and deemed to meet all residency requirements for participation in interscholastic sports or other extracurricular activities.
- ✓ **Increasing food security:** In 2013, AB 309 (Mitchell) clarified requirements pertaining to CalFresh applications submitted by unaccompanied homeless children and youth, including that there is no minimum age to receive CalFresh benefits.
- ✓ **Protections for homeless youth to prevent expulsion and promote graduation:** In 2014, AB 1806 (Bloom) extended to students who are homeless a set of policies and procedures for suspension, expulsion, graduation requirements, and completed coursework that were previously provided only to students in foster care.
- ✓ **Priority registration for homeless and foster youth:** In 2011, the California State Legislature adopted legislation requiring CSU campuses and community college districts to grant priority registration for enrollment to current and former foster youth (AB 194, Beall). In 2016, priority registration was extended to homeless youth (AB 801, Bloom). Priority registration was further expanded in 2016 (SB 906, Beall) and 2019 (AB 806, Bloom).
- ✓ **Housing for students enrolled in school:** In 2015, the California State Legislature adopted AB 1252 (Torres), which authorizes counties

to elect to provide a third year of THP-Plus to youth enrolled in school. As of July 1, 2019, more than half of the 47 counties with THP-Plus programs (27 in total) have opted into the provision.

- ✓ **Priority access to on-campus housing:** In 2009, AB 1393 (Skinner) required that CSUs and requested that UCs and community colleges provide foster youth priority for on-campus housing. In 2015 the provisions were extended to homeless students through the passage of AB 1228 (Gipson). AB 1228 also required that housing be made available to foster youth and homeless students during school breaks at no extra charge.
- ✓ **Creation of a state entity responsible for homelessness:** In 2016, SB 1380 (Mitchell) created the California Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council to ensure coordination among state agencies working to address homelessness. Its mandate was expanded in 2018 and 2019 with the passage of legislation creating the Homeless Emergency Aid Program and the Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention Program, which together will provide \$1.15 billion in funding to local jurisdictions to address homelessness. Prior to the creation of the Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council, there was no single California agency charged with addressing homelessness.
- ✓ **Homeless and Foster Student Liaisons on college campuses:** In 2016, the California State Legislature adopted AB 801 (Bloom), requiring CSU campuses and community college districts to designate a staff member to serve as a Homeless and Foster Student Liaison. The liaison informs current and prospective students about financial aid and other assistance available to homeless youth and current and former foster youth.

- ✓ **Change in state and federal policy for youth receiving SSI:** In 2016, the federal Social Security Administration issued new policy guidance authorizing foster youth with disabilities to apply for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) six months prior to exiting foster care, an increase from the previously allowable 90 days. Additionally, in 2019, AB 2337 (Gipson) went into effect in California, clarifying that young adults between 18 and 21 who were in foster care and receive SSI are permitted to re-enter extended foster care when they meet all other eligibility criteria.
- ✓ **Creation of first-ever state mandate to address youth homelessness:** In 2018, the California State Legislature adopted SB 918 (Wiener), California’s first-ever mandate to address youth homelessness, requiring the California Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council to set explicit goals related to youth homelessness, define outcome measures, and gather data related to those goals. The recently passed 2019-20 state budget funded two staff positions to implement the new law.
- ✓ **Transformation of Runaway and Homeless Youth Shelters to Youth Homelessness Prevention Centers:** In 2019, the California State Legislature adopted AB 1235 (Chu), which expanded the number of days a Runaway and Homeless Youth Shelter could serve youth from 21 to 90 days; expanded eligibility to minors at risk of homelessness; and changed the licensing category to “Youth Homelessness Prevention Centers.” These changes provide programs with adequate time to assist youth in achieving stability—in most cases returning to their families—and addressed barriers to access arising from overly stringent eligibility criteria.



- ✓ **Expansion of Family Unification Program for youth transitioning out of foster care:** The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has made several important changes to the Family Unification Program (FUP), a housing choice voucher program available to youth aging out of foster care. These changes include increasing the duration of the voucher term from 24 to 36 months, increasing the upper age of eligibility from 21 to 24, and issuing \$30 million in new funding in 2018 which provided for 435 new FUP vouchers across eight public housing authorities in California.
- ✓ **Identification and aggregate reporting of homeless students enrolled in K-12 schools:** In 2019, the California State Legislature adopted AB 16 (Rivas), which requires local educational agencies to ensure its school(s) identify all homeless children and youth enrolled, and to report the number of homeless children and youth enrolled annually to the California Department of Education. The bill also requires that the intake form used to identify a child as homeless include a statement that a child will not be removed from their family solely because the child’s family is homeless.

STRENGTHENED PRACTICE

- ✓ **Strategies to improve the accuracy of the Point-in-Time Count for unaccompanied homeless youth:** There has been a growing awareness that a unique approach is required to ensure that annual homeless Point-in-Time (PIT) Counts collect accurate information about the number of unaccompanied youth. A range of approaches have been documented, and jurisdictions across the state have begun to implement them.
- ✓ **Successful pilot project which demonstrated that providing youth legal services increased access to foster care:** In the Bay Area, a coalition of homeless youth providers, county child welfare agencies, and a legal services provider (Bay Area Legal Aid) improved access to foster care for older youth in homeless shelters by providing legal representation and connecting them to multiple public benefits for which they were eligible or were entitled to, including foster care.
- ✓ **Adaptation of Rapid Rehousing for Homeless Youth:** The past five years have seen an increased emphasis on utilizing Rapid Rehousing to address youth homelessness based on evidence that Rapid Rehousing screens out fewer applicants than transitional housing programs and moves households into permanent housing at higher rates, in less time, and at lower costs. These enhanced efforts include a multi-year campaign by the National Alliance to End Homelessness to train providers.

BETTER DATA

- ✓ **Unaccompanied youth were included in the PIT count:** In 2015, the annual PIT Count required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development included information about unaccompanied youth for the first time. Prior to that, unaccompanied youth were not a subpopulation included in the report.
- ✓ **First-ever rigorous estimate illustrating the prevalence of youth homelessness:** In 2017, researchers with the Voices of Youth Count at Chapin Hall published the first-ever national estimate of the prevalence of homelessness among minor children and young adults ages 18 to 25. Prior to the release of this publication, no scientifically rigorous estimate was available, limiting the effectiveness of advocacy efforts to address youth homelessness in California and nationally. The report found that nationally, one in 30 (approximately 700,000) minors ages 13 to 17 had experienced homelessness over a 12-month period and one in ten (3.5 million) 18- to 25-year-olds.⁶ This data also highlighted the limitations of the Homeless PIT Count in estimating the number of homeless youth in the U.S., which in 2017 counted just 4,789 unaccompanied youth under age 18 and 36,010 unaccompanied youth ages 18 to 24.
- ✓ **First-ever requirement to collect data in California:** SB 918 (Wiener), which went into effect January 1, 2019, included the first-ever requirement to collect data on youth homelessness in California. Data required by SB 918 include the number of young people experiencing homelessness in California and their dependency status, delinquency status, family reunification status, housing status, program participation, and runaway status.

⁶ Morton, M.H., Dworsky, A., & Samuels, G.M. (2017). Missed opportunities: Youth homelessness in America. National estimates. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.

FIVE-YEAR POLICY AGENDA: FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The following findings and recommendations are drawn from in-depth interviews with 44 experts in the field, including non-profit organizations providing direct services to homeless youth, local homeless Continuums of Care (CoCs), administrators of state funding, state advocacy organizations, national advocacy organizations and technical assistance providers, researchers, and state legislative staff members. Interviews were conducted between July and September 2019.



RESOURCES & FUNDING STREAMS

FINDINGS

Recent one-time investments have increased awareness about the prevalence and seriousness of youth homelessness among local homeless CoCs.

Interviewees noted that in recent years public and political will has steadily built to support a stronger governmental response to homelessness, including youth homelessness. They cited the creation of two new state programs, which together direct \$1.15 billion to local jurisdictions: the Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP) and the Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention Program (HHAPP). State law now requires that a minimum of \$77 million of this total be directed to address youth homelessness. Although these were one-time investments, interviewees explained that requiring the existing local homelessness coordinating body to administer youth homelessness funding brings great value to the community by building infrastructure in the CoC to address youth homelessness.

While helpful, one-time investments are not adequate to make a meaningful reduction in youth homelessness.

There were two consistent themes in interviewees' comments on recent one-time state investments.



First, they expressed support for a youth set-aside in all future one-time funding. Second, they noted that one-time funding such as HEAP and HHAPP is less useful to address youth homelessness than adult homelessness because there is a less developed infrastructure of existing programs that can be leveraged. Traditionally, CoCs, which are the local administrators of HUD funding, are oriented toward addressing homelessness among the adult population as a result of an historic lack of federal investment in youth homelessness. This has resulted in CoCs—with some exceptions—having limited relationships with youth providers and limited capacities to administer funding to address youth homelessness specifically. Interviewees emphasized that providing CoCs

access to sustainable funding for homeless youth would enable them to move beyond responding to the youth homelessness crisis and empower them to build their infrastructure and design more comprehensive and strategic long-term solutions.

Shelters for minors play a critical role in the emergency response to youth homelessness, but have a very limited funding source and are jeopardized by recent changes in federal policy.

Interviewees expressed concern that federal funding for shelters is limited, and that no dedicated state funding source exists. They explained that shelter plays an important role in the emergency response to youth homelessness, helping to prevent the trauma that can occur when a youth spends even a short time unsheltered and living on the street. Research has consistently found that homeless youth are at a heightened risk for victimization. Among the many studies that have drawn this conclusion is a 2016 study examining the experience of homeless youth participating in the Street Outreach Program, administered by the Family and Youth Services Bureau of the Administration on Children, Youth and Families. The study found high rates of victimization: 14.5 percent of participants had been sexually assaulted or raped, 32.3 percent had been beaten up, 18.3 percent had been assaulted with a weapon, 40.5 percent had been threatened with a weapon, and 40.8 percent had been robbed. Almost two-thirds (60.8%) had experienced at least one of these types of victimization. The study also found that for every additional month spent homeless, the likelihood of being victimized while homeless increased by three percent.⁷ In the past, funding for youth shelters has come in part from federal Title IV-E. Under new state and federal guidelines, youth shelters—which are currently either licensed as group homes or Youth Homelessness Prevention Centers—are no longer

able to access Title IV-E funding. One provider interviewed stated that this has resulted in a loss of over \$1 million annually to their youth shelter.

Federal reforms may decrease access to foster care by diverting youth experiencing neglect or abuse from the foster care system.

Interviewees raised concerns that the Family First Prevention and Services Act (FFPSA) may inappropriately divert youth eligible for foster care by designating a youth a “candidate” for foster care rather than opening a foster care case. Interviewees emphasized that if this occurs, it both places youth at greater risk of abuse and neglect and increases the number of youth seeking services from other systems, including the already overburdened youth homelessness continuum.

There is support for the federal Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program, but concern that California is not receiving the appropriate level of funding.

Another topic raised in interviews was the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP), which has provided three rounds of grants to local communities to pilot and test new and innovative strategies that can be replicated or scaled, including upstream prevention efforts. YHDP also mandates that participating communities account for overrepresented youth populations, engage youth with lived experience in planning and implementation, and implement strong cross-sector coordination. Interviewees in California jurisdictions that have received YHDP funding stated that they thought it was an effective investment and increased awareness about youth homelessness within their local CoC. However, significant concern was expressed that California is not being funded in proportion to the size of its homeless youth population. Over the three years

7 Heerde JA, Hemphill SA, Scholes-Balog KE. Fighting for survival: A systematic review of physically violent behavior perpetrated and experienced by homeless young people. *Aggress Violent Behav.* 2014;19:50–66 HHS (2016). “Final Report—Street Outreach Program Data Collection Study.”

that YHDP funding has been awarded, just 8.65 percent (\$13 million) of the total funding has been directed to communities in California, whereas California is home to 34.11 percent of the nation's unaccompanied homeless youth, according to the 2018 PIT Count.⁸

Family Unification Program (FUP) Vouchers are effective but need to be expanded and coupled with housing navigation services.

Interviewees expressed strong support for the use of Housing Choice Vouchers to address the needs of homeless youth, particularly young, homeless parents. They noted that HUD has recently launched the Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) Initiative, which provides access to Tenant Protection Vouchers (TPV) for up to 36 months to 18- to 24-year-old former foster youth at risk of or experiencing homelessness. While this is a positive development, interviewees noted its shortcomings for California: Under the FYI Initiative, TPVs are available only to housing agencies that do not already administer FUP vouchers which, like TPVs, are available to 18- to 24-year-old former foster youth for up to 36 months. In California, the majority of foster youth reside in communities where Public Housing Authorities do administer FUP vouchers, and there are not nearly enough FUP vouchers to meet the need. An additional concern expressed was that homeless youth require housing navigation services to ensure they will be able to secure housing once they are awarded a voucher. Particularly in housing markets with very low vacancy rates, youth struggle to find landlords willing to accept a government voucher.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Include specific funding set-aside to address homelessness among youth in future funding administered by the Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council.

As referenced by interviewees, given the federal prioritization of chronic homelessness among adults, without dedicating a portion of homelessness funding to address youth homelessness specifically, youths' needs will dissolve among the many priorities for adult funding. With the passage of SB 918 (Wiener), the Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council (HCFC) was charged with five new goals related to youth homelessness, one of them being to lead efforts to coordinate a spectrum of funding, policy, and practice efforts related to young people experiencing homelessness. The approach for administering one-time state homelessness funding through the HCFC in FY 2019 and FY 2020, which required local jurisdictions to spend a portion of their funding on youth homelessness, has shown to be effective: As of May 2019, local jurisdictions statewide reported having collectively committed 10.3 percent of their total HEAP funding to addressing youth homelessness, although a minimum of just five percent was required in statute.⁹ This success and demonstration of need led to an eight percent youth set-aside in HHAPP in the 2019-20 state budget and should be replicated in any future state funding to address homelessness administered by the HCFC.

8 In the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) 2018 CoC Homeless Populations and Subpopulations Report—All States, Territories, Puerto Rico and DC, 36,361 unaccompanied youth were counted. In HUD's 2018 CoC Homeless Populations and Subpopulations Report—California, 12,396 unaccompanied youth were counted (34.11% of the national figure).

9 John Burton Advocates for Youth. "Youth Homelessness in California: What Impact Has the Five Percent Youth Set-Aside in the Homeless Emergency Aid Program Had So Far?" (2019).



2. Set the percentage of funding designated for youth services within future state funding commitments to address homelessness at 15 percent.

According to the 2017 PIT Count, unaccompanied homeless youth age 24 and under accounted for 9.5 percent of the overall homeless population in California. In 2017, the *Voices of Youth Count* survey highlighted the severe undercounting of homeless youth resulting from the annual PIT Count, which only began including youth in 2015: The study concluded that over a 12-month period one in 30 minors (approximately 700,000) and one in ten (3.5 million) young adults ages 18 to 25 experience homelessness. These figures are considerably higher than the number of unaccompanied youth in the 2017 PIT Count, which found that there were 4,789 unaccompanied homeless minors and 36,010 unaccompanied homeless youth ages 18 to 24.¹⁰ The acknowledged undercounting of youth in the PIT Count, when taken with the historic lack of investment in youth homelessness, provides a strong rationale for committing a higher level of state funding—15 percent—while working to address undercounting in the PIT.

3. Establish a permanent source of state funding for homeless youth that funds a continuum of approaches.

Requiring local jurisdictions to use a percentage of their homelessness funding on youth homelessness has been an historic step forward in California. This important investment, however, does not eliminate the need for a permanent source of funding for homeless youth at the state level. Interviewees noted that homeless youth are the only subpopulation of homeless individuals that do not have a program dedicated to meeting their needs. SB 918 (Wiener) in 2018 and AB 307 (Reyes) in 2019 were efforts to accomplish this goal. Continued effort is required to secure funding that will support a continuum of programming for homeless youth across California, including shelter, rapid rehousing, and permanent supportive housing.

4. Replace funding lost to shelters licensed as Youth Homelessness Prevention Centers and group homes in order to maintain the state's network of shelters for minors.

California's Continuum of Care Reform and the federal FFPSA restrict federal Title IV-E funding for most congregate care settings including group homes—many of which also serve as shelters for youth—and Runaway and Homeless Youth Shelters (RHYS). In 2019, the licensing category for RHYS was renamed to Youth Homelessness Prevention Centers to better reflect their service model and reduce the stigma of utilizing the services they provide. Unfortunately, organizations are struggling to stay operational in the absence of Title IV-E funding. These programs play a critical role for minors experiencing homelessness and work closely with the minor's family to address family homelessness, resolve conflict, maintain school enrollment, and ultimately work toward reunification. New funding for organizations providing these essential services to homeless minors must be established to maintain the availability of programs and keep youth off the street, where they are at a heightened risk of victimization.

10 Morton, M.H., Dworsky, A., & Samuels, G.M. (2017). *Missed opportunities: Youth homelessness in America*. National estimates. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.



5. Transform HUD’s Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) into a permanent federal funding source and fund California in proportion to the size of its homeless youth population.

YHDP funding, which since 2016 has been awarded to three of California’s CoCs (San Francisco, Santa Cruz, and San Diego), has reportedly encouraged innovation, improved cross-sector coordination, and increased youth engagement. YHDP should be made into a permanent funding source to support communities in bolstering their capacity and coordination and improving their approach to addressing youth homelessness. Additionally, funding should be increased to enable more communities in California to access this important source of funding. Based on California’s proportion of the nation’s homeless youth population, jurisdictions in California should be receiving 34 percent of federal YHDP funding, as opposed to the 8.65 percent that California CoCs have collectively been awarded to date.

6. Modify the federal Foster Youth to Independence Initiative to allow public housing authorities that utilize FUP vouchers to also access TPVs for transition age foster youth.

Currently, the FYI Initiative provides TPVs to public housing authorities that do not administer FUP vouchers. While this is a positive development, its impact is limited because most foster youth live in the 31 jurisdictions in California that already administer FUP vouchers, and these housing authorities do not have enough FUP vouchers to meet local need. To address both of these issues, the FYI Initiative should be expanded to include public housing authorities that administer FUP vouchers. Additionally, the total number of vouchers should be increased, which would be accomplished by the passage of the Fostering Stable Housing Opportunities Act, currently being considered in Congress.¹¹

11 Fostering Stable Housing Opportunities Act of 2019, H.R. 2657, 116th Cong. (2019)



ADJACENT SYSTEMS & ACCESS TO SERVICES

FINDINGS

Rates paid for placements for older youth in foster care have not kept pace with the growth in the cost of housing, reducing the level of service provided to youth and putting them at risk of homelessness.

Interviewees expressed concern about the two most prevalent placements for non-minor dependents (NMDs) in foster care: the Supervised Independent Living Placement (SILP) and the Transitional Housing Placement for Non-Minor Dependents (THP-NMD). As of July 1, 2019, 65 percent (5,449) of NMDs were placed in a SILP or in THP-NMD.¹² While both of these placements have attractive qualities that have led to a high level of participation in extended foster care, they also have challenges.

In the SILP, youth identify where they would like to live. If it passes a basic health and safety inspection, the SILP is approved as a placement and the youth has the option of receiving their foster care payment directly. Unfortunately, in many housing markets in California, the SILP rate is not adequate to cover the full cost of rent, even in shared housing arrangements. Furthermore, in the SILP, there are no supportive services beyond a monthly visit with a social worker, such as housing navigation, case management, support with resolving roommate or landlord conflicts, managing a monthly budget, or support with education or employment. This results in high rates of housing instability.

THP-NMD provides youth with comprehensive supportive services in a semi-supervised setting. Unfortunately, the rate paid for THP-NMD has been

outpaced by the rising cost of housing, resulting in more of the rate being used to pay for housing costs instead of supportive services. As more of the rate is required for rent, less is available to fund the critical supportive services that support youths' emotional and economic stability, safety, and preparedness for independent adulthood, and decrease the likelihood of exits to homelessness.

Youth who achieve permanence between ages 16 and 18 are experiencing homelessness.

Interviewees expressed concern that youth who exit foster care between ages 16 and 18 are at high risk for homelessness. This population was specifically noted by each of the homeless youth providers interviewed. They cited current eligibility rules that require youth to be in foster care or out-of-home placement on their 18th birthdays to be eligible for extended foster care. This leaves out a small yet vulnerable population: youth who spent much of their young lives in foster care but exited to reunification, adoption, or guardianship just prior to turning 18. Over the 12-month period July 1, 2018, to June 30, 2019, this included 2,227 youth.¹³ While these youth have achieved the legal definition of "permanence," there are instances in which a guardian or parent ceases to provide support when the youth turns 18. This can contribute to an increased risk of homelessness and other crisis situations for youth who, by virtue of being in the child welfare system, have accumulated risk factors that persist when they enter young adulthood.

12 Webster, D., Lee, S., Dawson, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Putnam-Hornstein, E., Wiegmann, W., Saika, G., Chambers, J., Hammond, I., Sandoval, A., Benton, C., Hoerl, C., Yee, H., Flamson, T., Hunt, J., Carpenter, W., Casillas, E., & Gonzalez, A. (2019). CCWIP reports. Retrieved 10/30/2019, from University of California at Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project website. URL: <http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare>

13 Ibid.

Certain populations are at particular risk for homelessness as they transition from foster care.

Interviewees noted that while all foster youth face challenges in their transition from the foster care system, certain populations are particularly vulnerable and merit special consideration. The three that were raised repeatedly in interviews were custodial parents, youth with high behavioral and mental health needs and youth exiting the juvenile probation system. Interviewees and advocates underscored the need to continue working actively to prepare these young people for independence, whether at age 18 or 21. Many expressed that planning processes, including documentation, need more specificity and more accountability.

New federal legislation presents opportunities for the child welfare system to address youth homelessness.

Interviewees raised the possibility that FFPSA could benefit homeless youth if California elected to identify homeless minors as “candidates for foster care,” thereby allowing the state to claim newly available Title IV-E funding for specific services. These services may include mental health and substance abuse treatment, parenting skills training, parent education, and individual and family counseling. While interviewees expressed interest in investigating this approach, it was unclear if it would result in additional funding, given that FFPSA requires Title IV-E to be the funder of last resort.

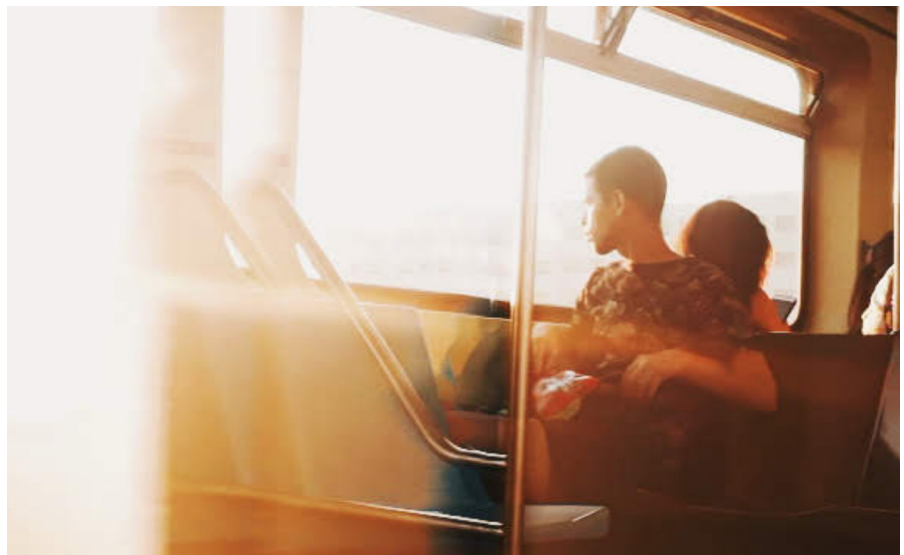
RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Adjust the THP-NMD rate to account for the rising cost of housing in California.

THP-NMD is an important placement for older youth in foster care, with over 2,000 youth participants as of July 1, 2019.¹⁴ To maintain and improve the availability of placement and quality of services in THP-NMD and ensure that youth do not exit to homelessness, the state should establish a county housing supplement based on HUD’s Fair Market Rent (FMR) system, with each eligible county’s supplement amount based on their FMR for that fiscal year.

2. Utilize newly available housing navigation funding to help youth with FUP vouchers secure housing and to support youth in SILPs.

In the FY 2019-20 state budget, \$5 million was included to provide housing navigation services for homeless youth, with a priority placed on youth formerly in the foster care and juvenile probation systems. This funding should be targeted to two populations of youth: those who have been awarded FUP Vouchers, so that they may successfully secure housing, and youth placed in a SILP, who currently receive no assistance in securing housing.



¹⁴ Ibid.

3. Develop differentiated transition protocols for higher-risk youth, based on their Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) score.

There is no specialized approach to ensuring higher-risk youth make successful transitions from the foster care system. These include youth who are custodial parents, youth with high behavioral and mental health needs, and youth exiting the juvenile probation system. Absent well-developed, targeted transition services, these special populations are at a disproportionate risk of homelessness as adults. One approach to ensuring higher-risk youth transition successfully is to develop differentiated transition protocols. As the CANS rolls out statewide as part of California's Continuum of Care Reform, this assessment tool could be used to determine who receives this intensified transition assistance.

4. Require Independent Living Programs to utilize a peer engagement framework.

Building on SB 1380 (Mitchell, 2016), which requires any state-administered program that provides housing services to implement Housing First policies, the state should require any programs serving youth to adopt guidelines and regulations that promote the integration of peer engagement strategies.

5. Modify child welfare practices to ensure access to foster care for older youth.

In interviews, homeless youth providers reported that county child welfare agencies often fail to open foster care cases when their staff make reports of maltreatment for older youth or when these youth make self-reports. According to these interviewees, youth who arrive in their shelters are often fleeing maltreatment at home. This report is substantiated by research on homeless youth, which finds that 75 percent of youth were maltreated prior to becoming homeless. In 2019, this topic was analyzed by the

California Legislative Analyst's Office, which found that maltreatment substantiation rates are lower for older youth than younger youth due in part to the fact that maltreatment reports for older youth are more frequently determined to not require an in-person investigation than are reports for younger youth. A second possible explanation is the local use of risk assessment tools designed to be used for younger populations, which can lead to inadvertently screening reports out. To ensure access to foster care for older youth, jurisdictions should consider requiring interviews and updating risk assessment tools.

6. Strengthen the safety net for former foster youth by increasing state investment in THP-Plus.

In California, the Transitional Housing Placement Plus (THP-Plus) program provides up to 24 months of affordable housing and supportive services to former foster youth ages 18 to 24. Several interviewees whose organizations operate THP-Plus programs emphasized that the program continues to provide an important safety net for former foster youth. As of June 30, 2019, there were 1,196 former foster youth in THP-Plus, including a significant proportion of parenting youth who collectively had 380 children residing in the program with them.¹⁵ The current statewide budget for THP-Plus is \$34.9 million. The program has remained at this funding level since 2012, despite a 64 percent increase in housing costs in California.¹⁶ Together, flat funding and growth in housing costs have increased demand for THP-Plus. As of July 1, 2019, there were 636 youth on waiting lists for the program, a 53 percent increase from the year prior.

California's FY 2019-20 state budget included \$8 million for county child welfare agencies to help 18- to 24-year-olds secure and maintain housing, with priority given to former foster and

15 John Burton Advocates for Youth. 2018-19 THP-NMD & THP-Plus Annual Report (2019).

16 Zillow: Median rent price of a two-bedroom apartment as of June 2012 compared to June 2019. URL: <<https://www.zillow.com/research/data>>

probation youth—a clear indication of legislative intent to grow the THP-Plus program. While this new funding is promising, continued increases in investment in this existing, high-performing housing program will be essential to address unmet need and reduce homelessness among former foster youth.

7. Prevent homelessness and child maltreatment by improving the standard of care for expectant and parenting youth.

Research from Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago has shown that young parents are among the three youth populations most likely to experience homelessness. Additionally, the research of Dr. Emily Putnam-Hornstein has shown that children of foster youth are more than three times more likely to have a substantiated report of maltreatment by age 5. Despite this high level of vulnerability, California has no clear strategy to serve the approximately 1,000 custodial parents in foster care. The implementation of the federal FFPSA is an opportunity to change that by drawing down newly available federal funding to serve parenting youth in foster care through evidence-based strategies, such as a Nurse Family Partnership, the Adolescent Family Life Program, and Parents as Teachers. These interventions will require a non-federal share of cost for the State of California.

8. Retool the Transitional Housing Placement for Minors (THP-M) to ensure that by 2021 it is a well-resourced placement for parenting minors and minors at risk of commercial sexual exploitation.

THP-M provides safe, affordable housing and supportive services for minors in foster care in a semi-supervised setting. It is rarely used: As of July 1, 2019, just 93 youth participated in the program statewide. This placement option should be retooled based on promising practices in use by current providers serving parenting minors and youth at risk of exploitation to ensure that by 2021 when FFPSA is implemented in California, the placement is a resource for eligible youth who do not desire to live in a family-based setting, or for whom a family-based setting is unavailable. The state should consider these changes to the program when developing a new rate schedule and methodology for the placement, which is currently required to be in place by December 31, 2019.

9. Include homeless youth in the definition of “candidate for foster care” in the implementation of the federal FFPSA.

California has an important opportunity to address the needs of homeless youth with the federal FFPSA, which permits states to provide prevention services to families at imminent risk of foster care placement. These “foster care candidates” qualify for Title IV-E funded prevention services, including mental health and substance abuse treatment, parenting skills training, parent education, and individual and family counseling. The California Department of Social Services is currently developing its plan to implement the new federal legislation, which includes who will be considered “candidates.” Homeless minors who have experienced maltreatment should be included as candidates.



K-12 & POSTSECONDARY INTERACTIONS & INTERVENTIONS

FINDINGS

Homelessness among youth is often first identified by their school, yet schools have few tools to address homelessness, and little knowledge of the federal and state-funded homeless response system.

Interviewees noted that homelessness is often recognized by teachers or school staff before child welfare or other authorities are alerted to it. Yet schools generally have inadequate tools to respond, and insufficient knowledge of and connection to their local Continuum of Care, charged with administering funding to address homelessness. Interviewees noted that in recent years, California overhauled its financing of K-12 schools, consolidating a range of categorical funding programs into a new Local Control Funding Formula that prioritizes funding to districts primarily based on the proportion of their students living in poverty, as well as the number of foster youth and English learners. As California continues to develop strategies and supports to address youth homelessness, there may be an opportunity to provide additional resources to schools struggling to serve high numbers of

homeless youth.

Higher education is making progress addressing food security and must now address housing insecurity.

Interviewees noted that significant attention has been devoted to improving the support available in higher education settings, particularly in addressing food security. The requirement that all California Community Colleges and CSUs appoint Homeless Student Liaisons, as established by AB 801 (Bloom), could be a promising strategy to connect homeless students to available resources including housing, however there is no funding to support this mandate.

On the housing front, select counties have dedicated funding to providing housing navigators to support homeless students on campus, and in 2019, California invested \$19 million annually to Rapid Rehousing for homeless students. Interviewees praised the availability of this option, and noted that navigators can play a key role in connecting homeless youth to available housing options.



However, there was also considerable concern that the risk assessments and intake procedures used in the adult homelessness Coordinated Entry System frequently result in homeless youth—college students in particular—receiving low “acuity scores,” leading them to be deprioritized for housing. These risk assessments, in most cases, have been developed for the adult and chronically homeless populations, and therefore do not accurately assess youths’ need, inhibiting their ability to access critical support services.

Some homeless students are not accessing the financial aid to which they are entitled while others are entering homelessness after loss of financial aid due to failure to meet Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP).

Interviewees cited financial aid as a critical component of supporting homeless youth, noting that in many cases, a homeless youth will



be eligible for classification as an “independent student” when completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). An independent student is required to provide information regarding his or her own income and does not need to have parental income information or a parent signature on the FAFSA, generally making them eligible for all need-based aid. Unfortunately, many homeless youth are not currently being classified as independent students. They therefore miss out on significant financial aid that could support them in securing stable housing.

According to interviewees, another frequent misstep in the financial aid process that impacts homeless youth is maintaining financial aid. Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) is a standard that students must meet to continue to receive state and federal financial aid. The U.S. Department of Education (DOE) requires that all institutions receiving federal financial aid have a SAP policy that includes a minimum Grade Point Average, a progress requirement of a minimum percentage of attempted units, and a maximum number of attempted units. Many students struggling with homelessness may fail to meet these requirements and ultimately, lose their financial aid. Institutions provide appeals processes which are based on the death of a relative, an injury or illness of the student, or other “special circumstances.” Many campuses essentially limit appeals to death or injury/illness, without taking the liberty to utilize the broad flexibility provided by the U.S. DOE to define “special circumstances.”

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Create a state match for federal McKinney Vento funding, directed to K-12 districts in which more than four percent of the total student population meets the definition of homelessness.

Each year, the U.S. Department of Education awards California \$11 million to address homelessness among its K-12 students. More specifically, this funding is intended to ensure

that the rights of homeless students are upheld, which include the right to immediate enrollment, the right to attend their school of origin, and more. At the current level of funding, California has struggled to meet this mandate, failing the most recent audit conducted by the federal government. To improve the capacity of schools to assist homeless students, California should match the \$11 million of federal funding and focus the additional funding in school districts in which more than four percent of the total student population meets the definition of homeless. This may include training McKinney Vento Liaisons—which are the required primary contacts between homeless families and school staff, district personnel, shelter workers, and other service providers—to assist homeless students with completing the FAFSA correctly.

2. Improve the risk assessments utilized in Coordinated Entry and other housing intake processes to reflect youths’ actual risks of homelessness.

Local homeless CoCs should consider how effectively their assessment tools measure youth risk and need for services, and whether they are inhibiting youth access to critical support services and housing. These assessment tools should be adapted to ensure that they are developmentally appropriate and responsive to evidence about a youth’s actual risk of homelessness.

3. Dedicate resources to ensuring that there are housing supports available to youth who have lower acuity scores.

In addition to improving assessment tools, resources should be devoted to providing housing supports to transition-age youth enrolled in school who are at risk of homelessness, even if they are assigned lower acuity scores. Connecting these youth with services will improve their ability to persist in education and will reduce the likelihood that they will experience chronic homelessness as adults.

4. Establish state funding for housing navigators and Homeless Student Liaisons at colleges.

Housing navigators and Homeless Student Liaisons can play a critical role in assisting homeless college students in accessing financial aid and other important resources. Unfortunately, there is no state funding to support Homeless Student Liaisons, and these individuals are often tasked with multiple responsibilities and have little time and fewer resources to play the critical role that was intended. Currently, no state mandate or funding exists for housing navigators on college campuses. To address this, the state should invest in housing navigators and Homeless Student Liaisons at colleges.

5. Train Homeless Student Liaisons to complete the FAFSA with homeless students correctly, so that they are accurately categorized as homeless and qualify for full financial aid.

Homeless Student Liaisons on college campuses should be adequately trained to assist homeless students with completing the FAFSA correctly. These liaisons should also understand the rights that homeless students have in regard to the verification process. For example, financial aid officers must accept documentation of homeless status from certain designated entities and cannot override this determination.

6. Require institutions of higher education to modify their SAP policies to prevent homelessness.

Schools should ensure their appeals processes for students who lose financial aid as a result of failure to maintain SAP include homelessness in the definition of “special circumstances,” in recognition of the particular challenges youth experience during an episode of homelessness.



STRENGTHENING THE CURRENT HOMELESS RESPONSE SYSTEM FOR YOUTH

FINDINGS

Youth voice is not adequately incorporated into planning and decision-making at the local level.

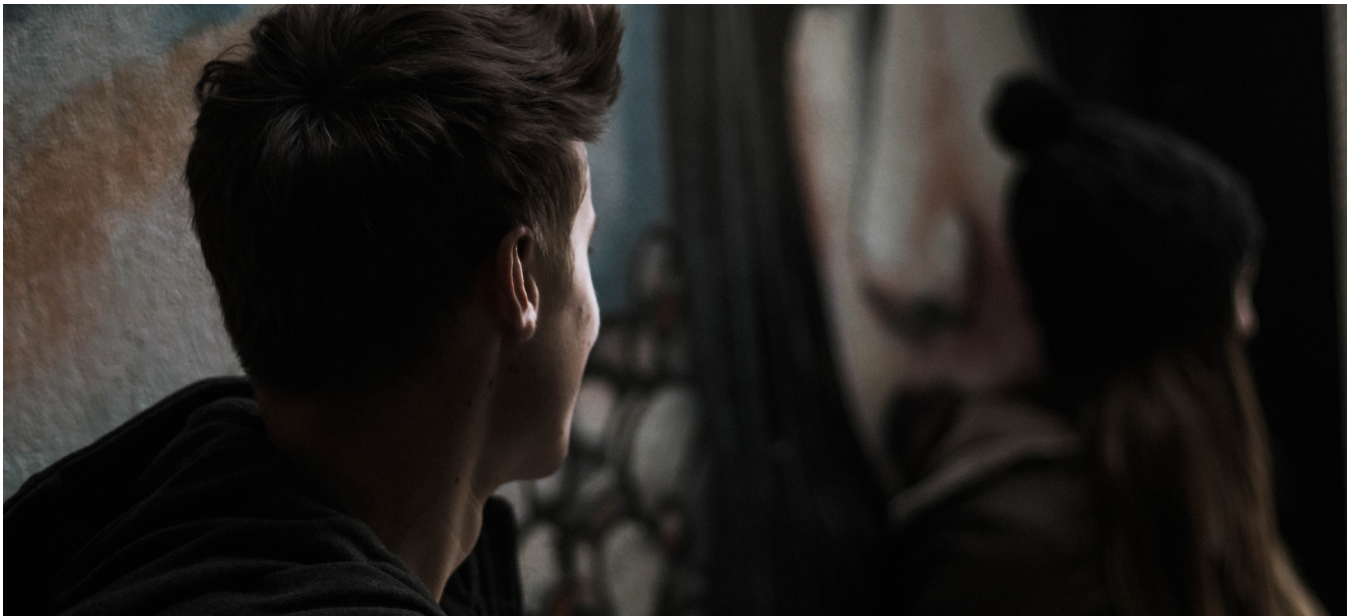
According to those interviewed, conversations about youth homelessness and adult or chronic homelessness have long been held at best in parallel, and at worst, in competition. A predominant theme of the interviews was that progress has been made over the past decade in elevating the experience and needs of youth in conversations about broader homelessness policy, resulting in policy action, investments, and innovation. However, interviewees expressed an ongoing need to adapt the adult homeless system to be responsive to the needs of youth.

Essential to the success of elevating the needs of youth in homelessness policy debates has been the voice of young people themselves, particularly in CoCs, where focus is often geared toward homelessness among adults. In California, the culture of advocacy increasingly demands the direct participation of youth in planning and oversight processes. The non-profit sector has made significant commitments and progress in learning how to prepare youth to be advocates—training them on policy and government process and helping them prepare to participate directly, ultimately supporting them in wielding significant influence in the legislature and administration.

Youth Action Boards have been an effective strategy to ensure new federal funding is youth-focused and that CoCs understand how to meet the needs of homeless youth.

According to those interviewed, emerging models of peer-led outreach, engagement, and service delivery show great promise in supporting youth in navigating systems, accessing services, and developing independent living skills. Programs throughout California recruit young people with recent lived experience and provide them with training, coaching, and mentorship to empower them to engage and support youth in transitioning from homelessness to housing, or from foster care placement to independent living in the community. Peer advocates can draw upon their personal experiences to engage youth and nurture developmental assets and protective factors including persistence, coping skills, self-advocacy, interconnectedness, and pro-social peer communities. Their support may range from directly assisting youth in applying to housing programs, to providing emotional support as they address and overcome barriers and challenges.

In well-developed peer-led models, such as VOICES—a project of On The Move, currently serving Napa, Sonoma, and Solano counties— young people with lived experience of homelessness and/or foster care are regular, full-time staff members who themselves deliver nearly all programming, including Independent Living Skills classes, case management, education and employment supports, and classes and activities focused on wellness and social-emotional development.



RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Allocate state resources to create a Youth Action Board at every local CoC.

Youth Action Boards ensure robust youth participation in CoC decision-making; inform CoC planning, program design, and resource allocation so that it better responds to the needs of youth; and expand access to federal funding opportunities. State resources should be dedicated to support the development and ongoing work of Youth Action Boards at all CoCs in California.

2. Provide technical assistance to local CoCs to support them in improving their PIT Counts to accurately count the number of homeless youth.

In both 2018 and 2019, the California State Budget included funding for homelessness based on the PIT Count, highlighting its importance. Given this, it is critical that local jurisdictions improve their capacity to accurately count the number of homeless youth. Select jurisdictions have invested considerable time and effort on youth-specific strategies, which have resulted in a higher, more accurate count of homeless youth. The Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council should

require these strategies as a condition of receiving state funding and provide technical assistance and training to all CoCs to ensure they are well implemented.

3. Provide training and technical assistance to increase CoCs' understanding of youth-specific challenges, positive youth development, and adolescent development.

Historically, CoCs have not allocated funding to address youth homelessness because there has not been a dedicated source of funding. This has resulted in a lower level of understanding and awareness about youth homelessness, including the fundamental concept of positive youth development. The Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council should dedicate resources to sharing best practices and delivering training and technical assistance to CoCs to ensure that their processes, policies, and programs are designed and implemented in a developmentally appropriate manner that responds to the unique needs of homeless youth.

APPENDIX: STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEWED

The following stakeholders were interviewed for feedback to inform the policy agenda or about specific issue areas or recommendations within the agenda.

Sue Abrams, Children's Law Center

Sherilyn Adams, Larkin Street Youth Services

Diana Boyer, California Welfare Directors Association

Elise Cutini, Pivotal

Mary Denton, Side by Side

Christina Dukes, National Center for Homeless Education

Laura Foster, Bill Wilson Center

Michelle Francois, National Center for Youth Law

Laura Guzman, EveryOne Home

James Hacker, California State Senate

Rebecca Hathorn, Side by Side

Beth Horwitz, Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago

Shahera Hyatt, California Homeless Youth Project

Stephanie Ivler, California Alliance of Child and Family Services

Susanna Kniffen, Children Now

Samuel Gonzalez, Hathaway-Sycamores Child and Family Services

Joe Herrity, Opportunity Youth Partnership

Eric Hubbard, Jovenes, Inc.

Emily Jensen, First Place for Youth

Stacy Katz, WestCoast Children's Clinic

Catherine Kungo, California Department of Housing and Community Development

Sherry Lachman, Foster America

Jodie Langs, WestCoast Children's Clinic

Sonja Lenz-Rashid, San Francisco State University Guardian Scholars Program

Kim Lewis, California Coalition for Youth

Chris Martin, Housing California

Julie McCormick, Children's Law Center

Kristen McLeod, Santa Clara Social Services Agency

Amber Miller, On the Move

Mindy Mitchell, National Alliance to End Homelessness

Genevieve Morelos, California State Assembly

Gillian Morshedi, Homebase

Margaret Olmos, National Center for Youth Law

Debbie Pell, Bill Wilson Center

Walter Phillips, San Diego Youth Services

Ginny Puddefoot, California Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council

Sharon Rapport, Corporation for Supportive Housing

Stan Rushing, Hathaway-Sycamores Child and Family Services

Xochitl Sanchez, San Francisco State University Guardian Scholars Program

Jane Schroeder, First Place for Youth

Angie Schwartz, Alliance for Children's Rights

Doug Styles, Huckleberry Youth Programs

Patrick Sweeney, Redwood Community Action Agency

Wendy Wang, Hathaway-Sycamores Child and Family Services