



HOLLYWOOD HOMELESS YOUTH PARTNERSHIP

Hollywood Homeless Youth Partnership Guide for Elected Officials

The Hollywood Homeless Youth Partnership (HHYP) is a collaborative of youth-serving agencies, including Aviva Family and Children's Services, Children's Hospital Los Angeles, Covenant House California, LA LGBT Center, My Friend's Place, Step Up, Youth Emerging Stronger, and partner agency Safe Place for Youth. We look forward to being a productive part of your efforts to address youth homelessness.

What's Going On?

There are adolescents (ages 12-18) and young adults (Transition-Age Youth, ages 19-25) living on the streets, in shelters, doubled and tripled up with friends, in their cars, or in other places not fit for human habitation. The agencies of the HHYP provided services to about 2,200 young people last year, and we know that available housing resources are woefully inadequate. Youth homelessness has different points of entry and different pathways to successful resolution than adult homelessness, and the current system is not built to meet the needs of young people.

Due to structural racism and discriminatory practices, Black and LGBTQ+ young people are disproportionately impacted by homelessness. Policies and solutions to address youth homelessness must center Black and LGBTQ+ young people in order to end youth homelessness overall.

Our community, with the support and leadership of our elected officials, needs to do the work necessary so that we can ensure that unhoused young people can access decent housing and the services they need to succeed.

What are the most difficult issues we face?

There are a number of issues which face young people with unusual severity, and which need to be understood specifically in the context of youth.

- The HUD definition of homelessness used in point-in-time counts prevents us from understanding the magnitude of youth homelessness in our community.
- There is a lack of data regarding effective housing strategies specific to young people. Longitudinal tracking of success is difficult, both for housing and for other interventions.
- The definition of "vulnerability" that is applied for adult populations in our coordinated entry system is not a good match for young people, who experience different forces pushing and pulling them towards homelessness than adults typically do.
- We need to fund and sustain genuine youth leadership bodies to help us design responsive youth service systems that will effectively reach young people.
- There are significant challenges of communication and management through the entire homeless services system. These are particularly acute for young people entering housing, both permanent and time-limited.

What are some proposed solutions?

Solutions both innovative and tried-and-true are available for us to pursue in partnership.

- Solutions that address inflow to homelessness, and include upstream strategies which keep folks housed, need more investment and promotion.
 - Changes to the last year of Child Welfare systems, including DCFS and Youth Corrections, to ensure that no young person is discharged to the street
 - Changes to ensure that every young person discharged has already been fully matched with Case Management services through existing on-site coordinators.
 - Stronger tenant protections are critical to keeping folks housed.
 - A rotating fund which covers up to three months of rent for families or individuals who experience a specific temporary emergency would be extremely useful.
- Cultivate and retain an effective workforce of dedicated staff by funding youth programs appropriately so staff can be paid a competitive salary.
 - Current salaries facilitate high turnover which causes disconnection and hurts program effectiveness. Our staff shouldn't be eligible for our programs.
- Outreach to young people must be planned to address the distinct needs and actions of young people, instead of being tacked on to the adult system.
- Non-police responses to mental health crises must take the unique needs of young people into account.

What are our needs?

As the Hollywood Homeless Youth Partnership, we need several specific policy actions.

- More housing targeted toward young people, such as transitional living programs and construction of diverse housing typologies that suit the unique needs of young people.
- More funding for staff salaries.
- Funding for mental health practitioners with youth-based expertise.
- More support for minors experiencing homelessness, individually and as part of families.
- Targeted resources for undocumented youth, particularly as we have been seeing more undocumented young people accessing our services.
- Institutional backing of programs that center peer support for mental health issues.
- Support for pregnant and parenting young people, including backing for housing programs tailored to their specific needs and more inclusive housing options.
 - The system currently underestimates the number of Transition-Age Youth who are pregnant and parenting
- Adoption of the [Young People to the Front](#) platform for empowering Los Angeles' youth and young adults.
 - This platform advocates for critical set-asides for funding programs targeted to young people, supporting an array of housing options tailored to unsheltered young people, and ensuring that beds are available for Transition-Age Youth in programs that fit their needs.
 - Because youth homelessness can be the start to a lifelong cycle, the platform also highlights the need for investing in youth-specific services to prevent long term homelessness
 - Decriminalization of homelessness and decarceralization of related systems like the foster care system.