

Improving Stability for Youth Exiting Care



Senate Bill 6560 required The Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) and the Office of Homeless Youth (OHY) to develop a plan that ensures **no young person will be discharged into homelessness from a system of care**. This document provides a high-level update on work to date and suggested funding and resources to move the needle.

Strategic Planning

2020

OHY submitted a report to the Legislature with the following priority recommendations: **Effective Transitions From Care, Community Connections, and Housing**. Find more detail in the full report located online at www.commerce.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Youth-Exiting-Systems-of-Care.pdf.

DCYF's Strategic and Racial Equity Plan includes a specific focus around a youth-centered planning process that prepares youth for adulthood through education, employment, housing, life skills, permanent connections, and appropriate behavioral health treatment. Read the full plan online at www.dcyf.wa.gov/practice/strategic-plan.

2021

The Health Care Authority (HCA) published a report on best practice standards for transitioning homeless transition-age youth (TAY) ages 16-25 from inpatient treatment to the community. Stakeholder feedback helped inform recommendations around establishing anti-oppressive care, meeting the basic needs of young people, support maintaining health relationships, and discharge planning to support recovery. Read the full report at www.hca.wa.gov/assets/program/safe-and-supportive-transition-for-stable-housing-for-transition-aged-youth-20210701.pdf.

OHY submitted a preliminary strategic plan on youth homelessness prevention to the Legislature focused on upstream efforts to prevent youth from entering systems of care. A follow-up report was completed in collaboration with a steering committee of lived experts, which includes recommendations under four main themes: supporting whole family well-being; universal support for basic human rights; eliminating racism in systems and supporting youth and families impacted by them; and shifting resources to Black, Indigenous, and people of color communities. Read both reports and learn more about OHY's efforts around prevention at www.commerce.wa.gov/serving-communities/homelessness/office-of-youth-homelessness/office-of-homeless-youth-prevention/.

IMPLEMENTATION



HOUSING

VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT: The WA Balance of State (BoS) Youth for Youth (Y4Y) Board developed and piloted an assessment in coordinated entry (CE) tailored to the unique vulnerabilities experienced by young people. The assessment screens for any current or prior involvement in public systems as a prioritization criteria for accessing housing services. Using a youth tool developed by lived experts is now part of the CE policies and procedures across the entire BoS. The Y4Y Board is preparing for statewide CE trainings.

COMMUNITY TRANSITION SERVICES: New resources were made available to ensure all young people releasing from Juvenile Rehabilitation (JR) are eligible to receive community-based resources to meet their individual needs. Using the Risk/Need/Responsivity approach ensures the right young person is served with the right services at the right time. DCYF is looking forward to collaborating with community partners to establish contracts and build a network of services and support, including housing assistance, behavioral health treatment, independent living, employment, education, family and community connections, mentorship, and legal advocacy.

ARLINGTON DRIVE YOUTH CAMPUS: OHY provided grant funding for comprehensive services provided to unaccompanied youth (ages 12-17) staying in overnight shelter (12 beds) and for young adults (ages 18-24) in safe and stable housing (58 rental units) on the Arlington Drive Youth Campus, a partnership between the Tacoma Housing Authority, Community Youth Services, and the Social Impact Center of the YMCA of Greater Seattle.

TRANSITION LIVING PROGRAM PILOT: OHY launched a Transitional Living Program (TLP) Pilot to provide 15 beds of longer-term housing for non-dependent youth who cannot return home. These TLP beds are available for young people in King, Whatcom, and Walla Walla Counties.



MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

ANCILLARY THERAPEUTIC SERVICES: OHY provided grant funding for grantees to administer behavioral health support services to youth (ages 12-17) in crisis in overnight youth shelters, HOPE centers and/or Crisis Residential Centers. Services are provided by either behavioral health staff or Licensed Mental Health Professionals (LMHP) and include crisis intervention; collaborative family engagement efforts, group or individual counseling or therapy; diagnostic mental health assessment; peer counseling, substance misuse prevention/education, and mental health screening, harm reduction counseling/services; and interagency care coordination with client involvement and aftercare services.

TREATMENT: Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery (DBHR) will continue to explore Recovery Case Management Medicaid State Plan options for Substance Use Disorder treatment as full integration continues to develop.

IMPLEMENTATION *(Continued)*



PROGRAM EXPANSIONS AND STAFFING

TRANSITION SERVICES: In October 2021, DCYF hired an Adolescent Transitions Program Manager who focuses on supporting youth as they exit from both child welfare and JR institutions. The Adolescent Transitions Program Manager is currently conducting community engagement to provide input on DCYF's new transitions framework. Additional regional staff will be hired to effectively implement the new transition framework across the state, and provide additional support in each of DCYF's regions.

PREVENTION: In July 2021, DCYF hired a Prevention Program Manager and is working on a re-design of Family Reconciliation Services that is grounded in the community to provide more consistent services across the state and allow for more equitable access.

ANCHOR COMMUNITY INITIATIVE: Skagit, Whatcom, Clark, Thurston, and Jefferson and Clallam Counties – five communities across six counties – joined the initial cohort of Pierce, Spokane, Walla Walla, and Yakima counties in the Anchor Community Initiative to end youth and young adult homelessness. Beginning July 2022, grants will be made to providers within these communities to facilitate new strategies to serve young people experiencing housing instability.

Immediate Legislative Action

2022 Session

- Support new and expanded housing and supportive services for youth exiting systems of care:
 - SB 5566 – Commerce requested expansion of eligibility and increased funding for the Independent Youth Housing Program (IYHP).
 - HB 1905 – New investments to support successful transitions from systems of care.
- Support the legislative priorities of the Children and Youth Behavioral Health Work Group (CYBHWG) including:
 - HB 1860 – Require the establishment of performance measures around homelessness and that managed care organizations fund housing-related care coordination services.
 - HB 1890 – Create a new advisory group for the purpose of developing a behavioral health strategic plan for children, young adults, and families. Expand membership of the CYBHWG and allow stipends for members with lived experience.
- Support budget provisos that target young people exiting systems of care:
 - \$600K for behavioral health funding for licensed youth shelters, HOPE centers, and crisis residential centers to provide behavioral health support services for youth in crisis, and to increase funding for current grantees. Currently in the House budget.
 - \$1M for short-term rental subsidies for youth with mental health or substance use disorders transitioning from inpatient treatment, juvenile rehabilitation facilities, or the child welfare system. Currently in the House budget.
 - \$200K for continued support the Steering Committee of lived experts on the prevention of youth homelessness. Currently in the Senate budget.
 - \$100K for DCYF to engage with lived experts to co-design community-based redesign of Family Reconciliation Services (FRS). Currently in the House budget.
 - \$200K to conduct assessment and make recommendations to improve supports for the extended foster care population to support successful transitions to independent adulthood. Currently in both House and Senate budgets.
 - \$1.292M to expand DCYF adolescent housing pilot to two additional sites.

6560 Workgroup Participating Organizations

Department of Commerce – Office of Homeless Youth Prevention & Protection • Health Care Authority

The Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families

Washington Balance of State Continuum of Care – Youth for Youth Board

Building Changes • NorthStar Advocates • The Mockingbird Society • Excelsior Wellness • Pacific County

Agency Contacts for more Information:

DCYF

Taku Mineshita
Acting Director of Adolescent Programs
taku.mineshita@dcyf.wa.gov

OHY

Kim Justice
Executive Director
kim.justice@commerce.wa.gov

HCA

Diana Cockrell
Section Manager – Prenatal to 25 Behavioral Health
diana.cockrell@hca.wa.gov