



100-DAY CHALLENGE CASE STUDIES

SOUTHERN NEVADA: CROSS-SYSTEM PARTNERSHIPS FOR HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION

The Southern Nevada 100-Day Challenge brought together representatives from the homeless response system, child welfare system, and juvenile justice system around the cross-system goal of preventing systems-involved youth from entering homelessness.

HOW SOUTHERN NEVADA MADE IT HAPPEN

The Southern Nevada 100-Day Challenge Team utilized data to identify that a high percentage of youth in need of housing are involved with public systems of care and do not meet the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) definition of homeless. In response, the Team established an ambitious cross-system goal of ensuring that systems-involved youth and young adults are prevented from experiencing homelessness, with a particular focus on youth involved in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

Representatives from the Department of Family Services (DFS), the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJS), and the Nevada Youth Parole Bureau served as 100-Day Challenge Team members and became strong partners in the community's youth homelessness prevention efforts. Through these new cross-system partnerships, the 100-Day Challenge Team was able to improve identification of systems-involved youth who are most vulnerable to exiting into homelessness, including youth concurrently involved in both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. The Team held regularly scheduled cross-system case conference meetings to discuss the specific needs of systems-involved youth and to leverage their existing resources to help youth exit into stable housing options.

Key Takeaways:

- Partnerships between the child welfare, juvenile justice, and homeless response systems are crucial for successful youth homelessness prevention efforts, including identifying systems-involved youth at risk of homelessness.
- Cross-system case conferencing is a valuable process for identifying the specific needs of systems-involved youth and to supporting their transition out of public systems into safe, stable situations.
- Cross-system partnerships are strengthened by having a clear purpose, defined outcomes and benefits, and opportunities for system partners to connect and better understand each other.
- Leveraging resources from across youth-serving systems can help meet the individualized housing and support needs of systems-involved youth and prevent system exits into homelessness.

As a result of these efforts, Southern Nevada was able to prevent 46 systems-involved youth from entering homelessness during the 100-Day Challenge. The community is dedicated to sustaining and expanding the cross-system partnerships and prevention efforts developed during the 100-Day Challenge, including the creation of a team to address the specific needs of youth dually involved in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

LESSONS LEARNED

1) Define a Clear Purpose for Cross-System Collaboration

The Southern Nevada 100-Day Challenge Team brought representatives from the child welfare and juvenile justice systems to the table around the clear, actionable goal of preventing homelessness for systems-involved youth. By beginning with a clear purpose for collaboration, child welfare and juvenile justice partners quickly understood the objectives the community was working to achieve and the importance of each system's role in the community's youth homelessness prevention efforts. Cross-system partnership efforts are also strengthened by defining clear outcomes and benefits that can be achieved for system partners through their involvement. In Southern Nevada, participation in the 100-Day Challenge helped the child welfare and juvenile justice system build stronger relationships with each other and the homeless system of care, leverage new housing resources, and improve exits into safe, stable housing situations for youth vulnerable to homelessness.

2) Support Increased Understanding and Knowledge Sharing Between Systems

Developing strong cross-system partnerships requires providing significant opportunities for system leaders to know each other, understand each other's systems, and share their unique experience and expertise regarding youth homelessness and systems involvement. The Southern Nevada 100-Day Challenge Team found that genuine cross-system collaboration was fostered through frequent in-person meetings where system leaders were empowered to ask questions, share resources, and break down myths and misconceptions about each other's systems that may create barriers to collaboration. The 100-Day Challenge Team met weekly at the youth parole office, which helped Team members improve their understanding of how the youth parole system operates and how they can collaborate more effectively with youth parole officers to prevent youth homelessness. Frequent communication across systems also helped partners realize that they were serving many of the same youth and encouraged them to reach across the table for assistance in referring youth to appropriate services.

3) Develop Cross-System Processes to Identify and Assist Systems-Involved Youth at Risk of Homelessness

Southern Nevada's youth-serving systems came together through the 100-Day Challenge to improve processes for identifying and serving systems-involved youth at risk of homelessness. Southern Nevada compiled a collaborative, cross-system list of youth at risk of homelessness and tracked their experience through the systems in which they are involved. Team members including representatives from Department of Family Services (DFS), the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJS), the Nevada Youth Parole Bureau, and numerous housing and homeless service providers used this list to conduct case conferencing for youth identified as exiting a public system and at risk of homelessness. The Team leveraged resources from across systems to find the best housing and support options for each youth, including HUD- and non-HUD-funded housing resources, family reunification supports, education and employment services, and mental health referrals. Additionally, providers from across systems are working together to establish youth-driven, multi-option housing plans for all systems-involved youth and to explore ideas such as peer mentoring that can bolster existing homelessness prevention efforts.