

Community-Wide Prevention of LGBTQ Youth Homelessness: Lessons Learned During Planning Phase

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is leading the LGBTQ Youth Homelessness Prevention Initiative (Initiative) to identify successful strategies for ensuring that no young person is left without a home because of their sexual orientation or gender identity and expression.

The Initiative began with two pilot communities that developed local, community-wide prevention plans, which they started implementing in fall of 2014. These plans include strategies for preventing LGBTQ youth homelessness and intervening early when it occurs.

Lessons Learned



Timelines. A six month timeline was seen as challenging but also integral to the plan's forward movement.



Needs Assessment. Baseline data was viewed as an important tool to inform planning phase activities.



Logic Model. Having a visual tool to identify inputs, goals, objectives, and activities helped to craft a clear vision.



Leadership. A dedicated lead agency with staffing and resources to facilitate the process was critical.



Stakeholder representation. Representation from LGBTQ community agencies as well as Continuums of Care helped to bridge services and populations.

Recommendations

Ready to plan your own community initiative? Here's where to start:

- ✓ Begin with data, an assessment of needs and resources, a shared vision and clear goals.
- ✓ Select partners strategically. Outreach to groups that may be difficult to engage. Be creative about meeting times and structure to help facilitate engagement.
- ✓ Build accountability into the planning process. Set clear expectations for participants' roles and decision making.
- ✓ Dedicate staff to the planning process. Plan with implementation and sustainability in mind.
- ✓ Access national resources, information emerging from this initiative, and external technical assistance where available.

National Partners

This initiative was developed by and is supported by five federal partners—the U.S. departments of Housing and Urban Development, Education, Health and Human Services, and Justice, and USICH—in partnership with the True Colors Fund, a nonprofit organization dedicated to ending LGBTQ youth homelessness. HUD and the True Colors Fund provided intensive technical assistance to build the capacity of the pilot communities to successfully plan and carry out their local plans.



For information and resources about the Initiative, visit <https://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/resources-for-home-less-youth/>.

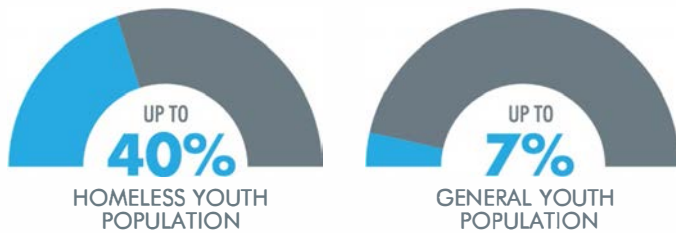
Contact John McGah, technical assistance lead (jmcgah@air.org) or Jama Shelton, Ph.D. (jama@truecolorsfund.org) with questions or to share information about your local prevention efforts.

Planning Phase Activities

Both sites engaged in the following planning phase activities over a period of 6 months:

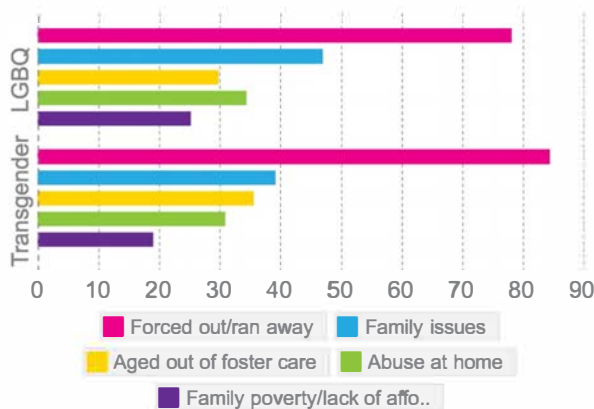
- ✓ Assessment of the community's commitment to addressing LGBTQ youth homelessness
- ✓ Identification of key stakeholders representing youth and youth serving agencies
- ✓ Engagement of key stakeholders through targeted outreach
- ✓ Creation of a workgroup consisting of key stakeholders and youth
- ✓ Development of timeline, benchmarks, and an action plan
- ✓ Coordination of initiative activities with the community's consolidated plan for addressing homelessness

The Issue



UP TO
40%
HOMELESS YOUTH
POPULATION

UP TO
7%
GENERAL YOUTH
POPULATION



5 Most Prevalent Reasons for LGBTQ Youth Homelessness as Reported by Providers

The Communities



NEST is a community-wide effort to prevent and end homelessness by 2020 among adolescents and young adults who identify as LGBTQ. NEST could change the futures of as many as 5,000 youth who run away or are kicked out of their homes in the community. This initiative co-ordinated by the Coalition for the Home-less Houston/Harris County in collaboration with Montrose Center represents more than 60 community youth agencies and service providers. The local lead contacts are Eva Thibaudeau (ethibaudeau@homelesshouston.org) and Deb Murphy (nest@montrosecenter.org).



From the beginning, a strong coalition of cross-sector stakeholders has driven the development of Cincinnati/Hamilton County's community plan. The Safe and Supported vision is every LGBTQ young person has stable housing, health care, education, employment, and emotional connections that ensure they thrive. The local lead contacts is Melissa Meyer, Safe and Supported Director (mmeyer@lys.org).

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