

Solid Foundations: Objectives and Strategies

1. Expand/Enhance Homelessness Prevention Efforts in Systems That Work with Vulnerable Youth	
1.1 Align goals between youth homeless services system, CFSA, DYRS, CSS, DHS, DBH, OSSE, and DCPS to ensure goals are complementary, focus on increasing protective factors, and are designed to create a comprehensive, well-coordinated system of care.	All youth-serving agencies
1.2 Conduct data match of youth in the homeless services system with those served by CFSA, DYRS, DBH, and DHS to understand the youth at the intersection of these systems and how to better target services.	DHS, CFSA, DYRS, CSS, DBH, TCP
1.3 Design and implement more appropriate, better-coordinated interventions for multiple system-involved youth (as identified under item 1.2 above). Identify lead entity within the District government to develop protocol and coordinate this multi-agency stabilization support.	DHS, CFSA, DYRS, CSS, DBH
1.4 Develop a discharge-planning protocol for youth receiving long-term services from or in the custody of CFSA and/or DYRS to ensure youth do not get discharged to streets or to the homeless service system. Train all front-line staff on protocol.	DHS, CFSA, DYRS, CSS
1.5 Identify performance metrics to regularly assess progress on increasing housing stability for multiple system-involved youth and to reduce discharge into homelessness.	DHS, CFSA, DYRS, CSS, DBH, TCP
1.6 Further expand Alternatives to the Court Experience (ACE) program, an evidence-informed and highly successful program, to prevent greater numbers of youth from entering the juvenile justice system.	DHS, OAG
1.7 Develop Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between police, schools, and youth-serving agencies to outline data sharing, referral and reporting protocols while working with vulnerable minors	MPD, OSSE, DCPS, CFSA, DYRS, DBH, DHS
1.8 Continue assessment and evaluation of innovative program models in DC (e.g., Wayne Place, Genesis) and around the country to identify emerging best practices.	DHS, CFSA, DYRS, CSS, DBH
1.9 Develop/issue guidance to clarify eligibility for services based on different Federal definitions used by different District agencies.	All youth-serving agencies
1.10 Given disproportionate reputation of LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness, initiate additional research to determine causes and identify targeted solutions for homelessness prevention.	Research/advocacy community
2. Expand/Improve Outreach, Assessment, and Reunification Efforts	
2.1 Expand drop-in and hotline services to operate on a 24-7 basis, to ensure youth always have a safe place to turn.	DHS
2.2 Pilot (and scale, as appropriate) the use of staff with behavioral health expertise for engagement and education at “front door” locations (e.g., integration with street outreach, at drop-in centers). Explore options for using Medicaid to pay for those services.	DBH, DHS, DHCF
2.3 Expand targeted youth outreach services (since high traffic areas for youth are often different than for unsheltered adults); increase the use of near-peers in outreach services.	DHS, DBH

Solid Foundations: Objectives and Strategies

2.4 Conduct more cross-training on youth needs and protocol for serving youth with adult outreach teams.	DHS, DBH
2.5 Conduct a review of our CES to determine how to better use the assessment process to identify youth with the greatest service needs and make more appropriate referrals to available interventions and services (i.e., family reunification support versus homeless assistance services).	TCP, DHS
2.6 Examine feasibility of expanding the Parent and Adolescent Support Services (PASS) Program, an evidence-informed and highly successful program, to ensure more youth (including transition age youth) can be successfully reunified with family and supported to achieve their goals from a home setting.	DHS
2.7 Conduct multi-lingual outreach campaigns – leveraging technology and social media as well as more traditional mediums – to ensure vulnerable youth know where and how to access services.	All youth-serving agencies
2.8 Increase cross-training for all youth providers on all priority populations identified in this plan.	All youth-serving agencies
3. Increase Dedicated Supply of Shelter and Housing Options	
3.1 Scale programs according to modeling presented in Chapter 3, as funding permits.	All youth-serving agencies
3.2 Conduct annual needs assessment (analyzing results of youth census, coordinated entry data, HMIS data, etc.) to determine extent to which set asides or preferences for specific sub-populations is needed (e.g., LGBTQ, non-English speaking, victims of household violence or human trafficking). ⁵	DHS, TCP
3.3 Design/tailor program models new to the youth continuum (e.g., TAY RRH) to ensure we are positioned to quickly use funds once appropriated.	DHS, TCP
3.4 Realign program rules for Permanent Supportive Housing for youth to allow for reassessment when youth turn age 25 and transfer (as appropriate) to adult programming.	DHS, TCP
3.5 Identify/implement strategies to ensure adult shelter acting as “overflow” for transition age youth in early years of plan implementation are safe and culturally and developmentally appropriate.	DHS, TCP
4. Support Youth to Develop Healthy, Permanent Connections	
4.1 Expand PASS program (see item 2.5 above).	DHS
4.2 Conduct data match with OSSE to identify schools where the majority of youth touching the homeless services systems are/were enrolled. Develop targeted youth mentoring programs in these schools and/or other neighborhood locations to help vulnerable youth develop healthy, permanent connections with trusted near-peers and adults.	DHS, TCP, OSSE, DCPS, charter schools, Public Charter School Board

Solid Foundations: Objectives and Strategies

4.3 Implement/scale “alumni programs” to offer positive role models and provide support for youth enrolled in longer-term programs (including transitional housing, TAY RRH, and PSH).	All partners providing direct services
4.4 Examine the District’s Host Home programs to understand what works well about the model, what could be improved, and what percentage of youth have a preference for this type of setting.	Research partners
4.5 Strengthen family stabilization programming across all systems: engage private sector research partners to review family stabilization services in the District, identify best practices (locally and nationally), and issue recommendations.	Research partners
4.6 Train providers on “social mapping” technique to help youth identify natural supportive relationships that can be cultivated or strengthened with services.	All partners providing direct services
5. Ensure Vulnerable Youth Have Opportunities to Finish Education and Experience Job Success	
5.1 Conduct review of system- and school- level policy and procedural barriers which limit the ability of youth experiencing homelessness to remain enrolled in school. Develop an action plan to remediate these barriers.	OSSE, DCPS
5.2 Conduct analysis to determine resource needs for state education coordinators and local liaisons to ensure the District can fully comply with provisions under the McKinney-Vento/Every Student Succeeds Act.	OSSE, DCPS
5.3 Coordinate with the family homeless services system to ensure families with school-aged children are prioritized for overflow shelter placements within the District (and as close to their school as possible).	DHS
5.4 Develop relationships with DC-sponsored and other internship/mentorship programs targeting transition age youth with the goal of preparing youth for financial independence. Youth will be paired with private sector partners to expand internship/mentorship and paid opportunities to learn on the job.	DHS, DOES
5.5 Conduct options analysis to explore cost feasibility of different strategies to expand transportation access to all locations where homeless students temporarily reside.	CFSA, DYRS
5.6 Work with the Office of Human Rights (OHR) to conduct testing, education, and enforcement activities to combat discrimination in hiring, particular among transgender individuals.	OHR
5.7 Identify potential funding opportunities and partners to supplement job readiness/placement programs with transportation stipends, work attire, etc.	WIC, DOES, DHS
5.8 Develop/launch a pilot program in conjunction with the youth homeless services system designed to help vulnerable youth apply for, prepare for, and manage the transition to college.	ICH, local universities, private sector partners

Solid Foundations: Objectives and Strategies

6. Support Social, Emotional, and Physical Wellbeing	
6.1 Ensure vulnerable youth are enrolled in healthcare and receive (as needed) assistance selecting providers, making appointments, etc.	All youth-serving agencies
6.2 Create alternate, non-traditional settings for behavioral health engagement and services (related to item 2.1 above); coordinate with DHCF to identify/leverage opportunities to ensure services are Medicaid billable.	DBH, DHCF
6.3 Ensure better continuity of services for youth aging out of the child mental health system by scaling DBH TAY Transition Specialists (currently being piloted under a grant from SAMHSA) and co-locating services within the homeless services system.	DBH, DHCF
6.4 Coordinate with homeless service system partners on the implementation of the District's Youth Sexual Health Plan, 2016-2020. Conduct analysis of plan strategies and tactics to identify areas for cross system collaboration.	DOH
6.5 Conduct analysis of changes needed within family homeless services system to provide more developmentally appropriate services to youth-headed households.	DHS
7. Build Capacity Among Providers and System Partners to Scale Programs	
7.1 Create partnerships to leverage community experts and create ongoing training opportunities on topics such as Trauma Informed Care, Positive Youth Development, Motivational Interviewing, Assertive Engagement, and Cultural Competency (particularly for LGBTQ youth) for front-line service staff.	Philanthropic, private sector, and advocacy partners
7.2 Ensure training requirements and service delivery expectations are codified in contracts.	All youth-serving agencies
7.3 Partner with local organizations to assist nonprofits with one-on-one organizational development and capacity building support on topics like financial management, fundraising, strategic planning, board development, and human resources.	Philanthropic, private sector, and advocacy partners
7.4 Implement strong monitoring mechanisms, including the use of a "secret shopper" program, to ensure the system is safe for all youth. Developing marketing materials to ensure youth understand how to report concerns/complaints and seek assistance if they are experiencing barriers within a program.	DHS, TCP
7.5 Ensure youth voice/representation on the ICH and youth-serving agency boards.	All youth-serving agencies