

LOS ANGELES COALITION TO END YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

August 30, 2019

We, the undersigned, are members of the [Los Angeles Coalition to End Youth Homelessness](#), recommend doubling the minimum amount of Homeless Housing, Assistance, Prevention Program Funding (HHAPP) to 16% (approximately \$20 million dollars) to be allocated to youth homelessness prevention and supportive services for youth experiencing homelessness.

Expansion of Access Center Funding

- Access centers are the primary youth homelessness prevention services that exist within the City of Los Angeles.
- Up to 5,000 unique young people experiencing homelessness and housing instability access day services and drop-in centers in the City of Los Angeles every year.
- Access centers, in conjunction with street outreach, are critical for connecting youth experiencing homelessness to the services that they need yet are continuously underfunded.
- Access centers are essential for a trauma-informed model of care, prioritize individual self-determination and provide diversion from the overburdened homeless services system.

Expand the City's Youth and Young Adult Workforce Development and Readiness Trainings programs

- In 2019, 67% of young people experiencing homelessness were unemployed in Los Angeles and 25% cited economic hardship as their main reason for unstable housing.
- Employment readiness and workforce development is critical for successful exit from homelessness as well as for prevention of long-term chronic homelessness.
- The LA:RISE Program can expand funding to youth and young adult specific internships to promote employment in social enterprises and prepare young people experiencing homelessness for the workforce.
- It is necessary to expand for-profit partnerships with the LA:RISE Program and prioritize programs that are youth-driven.

Prioritize Bridge Housing Beds for Young People Experiencing Homelessness

- The City of Los Angeles continues to expand bridge housing, yet, very little of the funding has been designated specifically for young people.
- Bridge housing is essential for successfully exiting out of homelessness as other long-term housing programs (i.e. rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing) expand.
- As the waitlist for accessing rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing continues to grow, the importance of bridge housing grows simultaneously. Bridge housing addresses the gap between exiting the street and entering a permanent housing solution by increasing a young person's long-term success in these programs and reduces the risk of a young person returning to homelessness (see [Morton et al, 2018](#)).

Increase the Number of Transitional Living Placements (TLP) for Young People Across the City

- There are less than 800 TLP beds across the Los Angeles Continuum of Care, which vastly underserves the multiple thousands of unsheltered young people in the City of Los Angeles.
- The City of Los Angeles has the capacity to increase the number of TLP beds by creating and or designating infrastructure projects that would be reserved for young adults.
- Transitional living as a model supports adolescent and young adult development and can prioritize specific underserved youth populations including pregnant and parenting, system involved, and LGBT+.

Fund research and innovative pilot projects to ending youth homelessness

- It's necessary to evaluate implemented solutions for continuous refinement and improvement.

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- Funding should prioritize quantitative and qualitative analysis to measure the effectiveness of the programs being implemented by the City and highlight the voices of young people with lived experience.
- Additionally, innovation is critical for ending youth homelessness and several evidence based-models that address poverty exist that could be piloted in the City of Los Angeles.

In 2019, over 2,500 adolescents and young adults were estimated to be experiencing homelessness.

The majority of young people experiencing homelessness were unsheltered (65%). The rate of inflow into the young adult homelessness system is higher than that for adults with approximately 6,671 young people becoming homeless in 2018. Furthermore, point-in-time estimates are often underestimates and do not represent the scope of young people who are unstably housed and at-risk of homelessness.

With limited access to age-specific resources including prevention, outreach, bridge housing, workforce development and affordable housing, it is immensely harder for young people to safely and successfully exit homelessness. Every year, a portion of the population of young people experiencing homelessness in the City of Los Angeles matriculates into the adult homeless population. This adds to the strain on an already overworked adult service system and increases the likelihood of young people experiencing chronic homelessness, which has significant long-term institutional cost implications. By prioritizing youth-specific resources, supportive services and prevention it is possible to reduce youths' likelihood of experiencing chronic adult homelessness.

The over-representation of young people among the homelessness population is due to the underfunding of preventive and supportive services for this particular age group. Based on our collective experience in providing services for young people experiencing homelessness in the City of Los Angeles, we know that the vulnerabilities of this population are unique and therefore require specific intervention and services. However, the majority of services currently offered in the City of Los Angeles have significant gaps and shortfalls in addressing their needs. Young people often have compounding factors contributing to their experiences of homelessness, including disruption from family, significant early life trauma, mental illness, criminalization, and discrimination. In fact, research shows that the relative risk of experiencing homelessness is 83% higher for African American youth, 33% higher for Latinx youth, and 120% more likely for LGBT+ youth. We are available to you and your staff to provide support and information regarding these proposed strategies. Please contact laceyh@findyourlens.co for any follow up.

Sincerely,

The undersigned members of the Los Angeles Coalition to End Youth Homelessness

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