

2019 Briefing on Youth Homelessness

Key Messages

Key Takeaway: Youth experiencing homelessness have a special set of needs, and LA's youth homeless system is providing specialized programs that help homeless youth get their lives back on track. This groundbreaking system of trauma-informed services is helping more youth than ever move out of homelessness and into housing—and there's much more work to do.

- **Three years into the establishment of the youth coordinated entry system, Los Angeles is working more effectively than ever to move youth out of homelessness—but it's just a start.**
 - This year's Greater LA Homeless Count showed that 4,021 transition age youth (ages 18-24) experienced homelessness in LA County, a 22% increase over the previous year.
 - LAHSA's data team estimates 6,671 become homeless over the course of 2018—a rate of inflow even higher than that for adults.
- **Measure H funds have allowed LA County to exponentially increase our positive impact moving youth out of homelessness:**
 - 3,839 youth accessed LA's youth coordinated entry system last year, through youth drop-in centers, access points (case managers working at public spaces such as libraries or community centers), interim housing, or support services.
 - We've tripled the number of youth supported through homelessness prevention services: 71 – 295
 - We are serving 9 times the number of youth each year through outreach & engagement: 528 – 4498
 - Transitional housing is the system's single largest resource for youth, with 700 beds across all service planning areas, and we've added 184 beds for youth and young families since 2017.
 - We have **more than doubled** the number of youth who move into Permanent Housing Placements each year, from 976 – 2021—including a tripling of youth in rapid rehousing, one of our most effective and accessible interventions (**from 568 to 1638**)
 - Despite these gains, it's important to recognize that we are still reaching a small portion of the total youth population, and we must continue scaling up.
- **Homeless youth are unique, and we've created a specialized system to meet their needs.**
 - Definition: Age 18-24 (not kids with parents, not in foster system)
 - 92% of homeless youth cite **fragile social networks** as their cause of homelessness, making LA's family strengthening programs even more critical.

- More than half (56%) of youth report they have experienced domestic or intimate partner violence in their lifetime, compared to 43% of adults—and 15% said that fleeing domestic or intimate partner violence was their cause of homelessness.
 - Nearly half have already had at least one experience of homelessness—higher than the adult population.
 - 40% are black (a higher rate compared to LA County’s general population and to the adult homeless population)
 - 18% are LGBTQ; 25.8% of homeless youth fleeing domestic/intimate partner violence are transgender.
 - 29% exited the foster care system and 62% have criminal justice system involvement, highlighting needs for specialized support to overcome barriers to housing and self-sufficiency
 - Tens of thousands of youth are on the verge of homelessness; annualized estimate compared to the point-in-time count (6,671) is higher than for adults
- **Increased positive outcomes are due to investments in a better system. Today, we know homeless youth better, and we serve homeless youth better than ever before.**
 - **KNOW:** With better information, we can address the needs particular to youth of color and LGBTQ. We understand the roles played by the prevalence of domestic violence and interactions with the criminal justice and foster systems. Better information about the drivers of homelessness allow us to reach youth faster and tailor interventions effectively.
 - **SERVE:** The previous three years have transformed this system in five key ways:
 - **It’s bigger.** We’ve added 184 transitional housing beds (for a total of more than 700) and more than 500 rapid rehousing slots (to 1,638) since 2017.
 - **It’s more coordinated.** Formerly siloed, now connected to employment, foster system, health and other county departments.
 - **It’s more collaborative.** We have partnerships with 45+ providers. The idea is there's no wrong door; a young person goes to any participating service provider, who will evaluate them in a standard way, and they'll get connected to a fully coordinated, standardized system. One database across the system, so all youth have equal access to all resources.
 - **It’s more sophisticated** in matching youth to the services they need based on their specific subpopulation needs, their mental health, their living conditions, and many more factors. Trauma-informed care.
 - **It’s more preventative.** Programming reaches youth at risk and keep them from falling into homelessness.
- **Here’s what we need to do and where we are focusing our investments and programs**
 - **Build on what's working**
 - Rapid Rehousing
 - Transitional housing
 - Access centers and access points
 - Family strengthening
 - Host home programs
 - **Increase connections to education (high school, post-secondary, vocational)**

- Measure H funds Education Coordinators in each SPA to support Youth CES participants with high school completion and post-secondary access by partnering with LACOE and LAUSD.
 - LAHSA convenes the Higher Education and Homelessness Workgroup to improve linkages between campuses and the homeless response system, expand resources available to students both on and off campus, and improve postsecondary access for youth experiencing homelessness
- **Increase connections to employment**
 - Homeless youth have been identified as a priority population in new programs & partnerships with workforce development agencies, focused on improving outcomes for disconnected youth (youth not enrolled in education and unemployed)
 - Our workforce partners have expanded investments in subsidized employment, job training programs, paid internships, and other workforce development services specific to youth experiencing homelessness
- **Build on new connections to the foster and probation systems, helping our most vulnerable youth avoid and/or exit homelessness**
 - More than half (57%) of Youth CES participants report some type of contact with the foster care and/or Probation systems
 - New levels of collaboration in recent years to enhance efforts to:
 - prevent homelessness among former foster youth and Probation youth;
 - facilitate smooth connections as needed from foster care and Probation to the homeless response system; and
 - expand and align housing and supportive services for current and former foster and Probation youth
 - Through this effort, DCFS and Probation have enhanced their discharge planning policy for youth exiting these systems -- extended from 90 days before exit to 180 days before exit
 - DCFS has expanded its Transitional Housing inventory for youth in care and exited from care by about 225 beds
- **Part of our increased effectiveness is built on better information coming out of a more sophisticated homeless count—with heavy involvement of youth with lived experience with homelessness**
 - Providers believe this year's number is a more accurate representation of homeless youth than past years, so what seems at first glance to be an increase in homeless youth is driven in part by a more robust system of counting and serving homeless youth. The count team itself had more youth with lived experience than ever before.
- **We all can help solve this crisis. We must continue investing in our specialized system for youth, and say yes to housing in all of our neighborhoods.**
 - Support more youth interim and supportive housing in your neighborhood
 - Advocate for expanded state and federal funding for affordable housing and homeless services
 - Become a host home for a youth experiencing homelessness

- Landlords can accept section 8 vouchers, participate in youth-specific housing programs, and make their units available for rapid rehousing
- Volunteer at your local service agency for homeless youth