

HCTAYC Homelessness Recommendations

1. Developing Appropriate Programming and Services for Homeless Youth

- a. Extend age of eligibility for transition aged youth (TAY) homeless services through 25.
- b. Evaluate existing programs and services to ensure youth-friendly environments that meet the needs of homeless TAY and identify gaps where additional services are needed. Existing programs should be evaluated to ensure they offer adequate transitions to community, appropriate structure, specialized mental health services, a youth-friendly environment, adequate hours, access to public transportation, alcohol and drug services, employment services, housing assistance, peer staffing, staff training and support for relationship building and accommodation for pets.
- c. Develop a TAY center with services housed together.
- d. Develop services for homeless parenting youth.
- e. Create additional resources to assist homeless youth in meeting basic needs by providing food resources, offering areas to bathe, and storage for belongings in all areas of county.
- f. Partner with local transportation department to provide extended service areas, bus hours and subsidies so homeless TAY can access services.
- g. Provide training and education for DHHS staff and others who work with TAY on understanding the unique needs and experiences of homeless youth.

2. Supporting Education of Homeless Youth

- a. Work with local schools and school districts to address needs of homeless youth students, ensure ability to complete education and reduce stigma.

3. Ensuring Access to Services for Homeless Youth

- a. Provide outreach to homeless youth on available services by targeting areas where youth hang out, creating a website, and utilizing DHHS street outreach to offer information on services.

4. Assisting Homeless Youth in Getting Off the Street

- a. Develop affordable housing resources for TAY that include increasing housing stock with rent less than \$300, developing emergency transitional housing and rental assistance funds, and identifying landlords willing to rent to TAY.
- b. Partner with youth to explore creative housing ideas for TAY, such as creating a campus dorm with services or a green social enterprise program.
- c. Develop employment resources for homeless youth to assist youth in obtaining employment that pays a living wage through cultivating relationships with and educating employers and assisting in job placement and support.
- d. Work with law enforcement to build sensitivity and develop new approaches to serving homeless youth, such as providing resource information, rather than criminalizing homeless youth.

5. Advocacy for Homeless Youth

- a. Provide advocacy to homeless youth on understanding and applying for public benefits, obtaining needed documents, credit issues, addressing any criminal background issues, and legal issues like emancipation.

6. Preventing Homelessness

- a. Offer services together to youth and parents to prevent and address problems causing homelessness, such as bias and discrimination against lgbtq (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer/questioning) youth, substance abuse and domestic violence among other social issues.
- b. Focus on providing vulnerable TAY early and thorough transition planning and independent living services to plan for independence.
- c. Create an in-county housing first model substance abuse/mental health program for youth run by youth development specialists.