

Polk County Plan to End Youth Homelessness
Update to Stakeholders and Polk County Continuum of Care Board
June 7, 2017

Summary:

Through the work of the first stakeholders meeting on April 24, four work groups were developed to explore strengths and opportunities for growth in the current system, best practices, and develop recommendations for the final community plan. The following describes the work of the first round of meetings for each of these work groups and the Youth Advisory Board.

Highlights:

Youth Advisory Board: (May 10th, 12 attendees)

- Youth submitted ideas for the plan (see YAB meeting summary, 5/10)
- Youth expressed interest in developing art, music, and movies to help communicate to stakeholders and the public about their experiences, hopes for the future, and ideas for the plan.
- Next meeting: Wednesday, June 14, 6:00-7:30.

Prevention: (May 19, 8 attendees)

- Developed and approved objectives for work group
- Reviewed causes of youth homelessness: child abuse and neglect, unsafe home environment, family unaccepting of LGBT, lack of permanent connections, mental health/substance abuse, lack of affordable housing options
- Discussed strengths and challenges to prevention regarding youth in foster care vs. non-system involved
- Next meeting: Wednesday, June 28

Housing & Services: (May 23, 11 attendees)

- Developed and approved objectives for work group
- Reviewed current shelters, programs, and housing options for youth who are homeless. A complete review of bed count and adherence to overarching principles will be completed by YPII and reviewed at the next meeting. Challenges and gaps in housing options and services noted.
- Next meeting: Wednesday, June 14

Communications: (May 31, 6 attendees)

- Discussed three main “audiences” to communicate with, information to share and intent. 1) external--public, community leaders 2) Internal--service providers and public systems, 3) Youth who are vulnerable to homelessness or homeless
- Reviewed current systems map and examples from other communities
- Next meeting: Tuesday, June 27

Data & Assessment: (June 2, 11 attendees)

- Reviewed and discussed current sources of data and data points including number of youth who are homeless through point in time count, HMIS, Aftercare (formerly in foster care), health care, and education
- Discussed strengths and challenges to data collection and generated ideas for improvement including increased outreach to schools, jail, hospitals, etc.
- Next meeting: Friday, June 23

Next steps:

Each group will review recommendations from federal agencies and national organizations. With these recommendations and work group ideas in mind, groups will develop community goals that describe what the community hopes to achieve through the plan. The goals will be discussed and submitted for review at the stakeholders meeting on July 24.

Respectfully Submitted by: Andrea Dencklau, Youth Policy Institute of Iowa on 6/7/17