

Overview of State Wide Efforts on Youth Homelessness

1. Quick Overview of Systemic Reasons for Youth Homelessness-

There are many systemic reasons for youth homelessness-many of them the same as adult and family homelessness such as lack of affordable housing, lack of earning a livable wage, lack of affordable or appropriate health care, chemical dependency, mental illness, racism, homophobia or domestic violence. There are, however, some other systemic reasons for youth homelessness such as some failures in the child welfare system. These all are large and complex issues that seem overbearing-but we can make positive change with a coordinated effort.

2. State Wide Collaborations working on Homelessness (including youth homelessness) and explanation of what they are doing:

- Continuum of Cares
- Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance Programs
- Interagency Taskforce on Homelessness
- Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless
- Minnesota Youth Services Association

** Currently there are several parts of the state who are not working with homeless youth well or at all-we are working to provide these regions or areas of the state with more assistance and guidance on how to advocate and work with homeless youth. In addition also working to get more of a youth focus in FHPAP programs and CoC's.

3. Current State Wide Projects/Initiatives for Homeless Youth

- Homeless Youth Prevention and Assistance Funding (legislature appropriated a little over a million per year though 2009)
- Governor's Plan to End Long Term Homelessness (legislature has approved \$10 million for this purpose), explain how youth fit into this plan
- Efforts to Improve the Child Welfare System (Child Protection, Foster Care, Adoption)
- Recent Changes to GRH (Group Residential Housing)
- State Housing Trust Fund Proposal
- Youth Advancement Act

Other:

- Street Outreach Pilot Program
- Existing Funding for Homeless Youth: SELF, ETVs, and McKinney Vento

4. Collaborating to Achieve Systemic Change

- Come together on the issue of youth homelessness-we have so many different systems working on the issue-state, county, city, faith based, schools, corrections, nonprofits, etc. We need to be working together and portraying consistent messages-if we can't come together than elected officials can't either.
- Work with Family and Adult Homeless Programs

- Provide Research and Cost Benefit Analysis of what the issue of youth homelessness is costing the state of Minnesota now v. if we shifted funding and put money into programming and prevention and had eventually had no youth homelessness.
- Advocate to establish and change (if needed) policies and procedures affecting youth homelessness-for example youth transitioning out of foster care-can we keep them in foster care until they are 21, etc.