



Preventing and Ending Youth Homelessness in Cuyahoga County: A Strategic Plan

A PLACE 4 ME





Every young person
belongs and deserves
a place to call home.

INTRODUCTION

Every young person belongs and deserves a place to feel safe and comfortable; a place to feel welcomed and loved by family and friends; a place to dream about the future.

But for far too many youth in Cuyahoga County, this place doesn't exist. Each year, hundreds of young people experience homelessness and housing instability in our community. They lack the consistency, familiarity and stability of a home. And without it, everything seems harder.

The *A Place 4 Me* initiative — named and inspired by youth — is working to change this by creating a coordinated plan to prevent and end youth homelessness in Cuyahoga County. A Place 4 Me emphasizes the unique needs of youth who experienced foster care and lack the emotional and material support of a family, leaving them particularly vulnerable to housing instability. National data indicate that nearly 40 percent of former foster youth will experience homelessness or housing instability by their 24th birthday.*

No one organization or agency can take on the task of preventing and ending youth homelessness. It requires diverse and innovative thinking from nonprofit organizations, public systems, local government, the faith-based community, funders and — most especially — the young men and women with deep expertise that is only attained through lived experience and resiliency.

These are the public and private partners that represent the A Place 4 Me initiative. Over a 10-month period, nearly 70 individuals from 30 partner agencies have worked together to develop a strategic plan, including core goals and creative strategies, to prevent and end youth homelessness. This plan is intended to honor the work that's been done and serve as a starting point for moving forward.

Our Plan:

- Prioritizes the needs of youth and young adults ages 14 to 24 in Cuyahoga County who are:
 - Unaccompanied by a parent, legal guardian or spouse, and
 - Lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence
- Emphasizes homelessness prevention for youth leaving the foster care system and acknowledges the key role of the Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services in supporting successful transitions to adulthood for these youth
- Reflects the diverse perspectives of the planning members, especially the young people who generously shared their experiences and ideas to improve our system
- Represents a shared commitment and vision to implementing these strategies to better serve youth
- Is ambitious, comprehensive and drives at greater coordination and alignment of services to restore housing stability for young people in Cuyahoga County

A Place 4 Me advances the collective idea that there will be a place for every young person, not just in terms of safe and stable housing, but as a contributing member of our community.

We intend to take this idea and make it a reality for all youth.

*Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth. Chapin Hall. 2011.



THE BACKGROUND

Our Structure

A Place 4 Me is a “collective impact” initiative. Collective impact is a model of collaboration that “occurs when organizations from different sectors agree to solve a specific social problem using a common agenda, aligning their efforts and using common measures of success.”*

A Place 4 Me is guided by a diverse steering committee led by YWCA Greater Cleveland and representing the leadership of the Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services, FrontLine Service, the Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland and the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative. A program director coordinates the multiple partners involved in the A Place 4 Me initiative and manages the day-to-day work.

Through this partnership, Cuyahoga County is the 18th national site of the **Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative**, which works across the country to improve outcomes for youth transitioning from foster care. The Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative has provided valuable financial support and technical assistance utilizing a framework that has shown positive outcomes nationally. The framework emphasizes youth engagement, community collaboration, data and research, advocacy and increased opportunities for youth.

Our Process

PHASE 1: Community Visioning — April to June 2014

The A Place 4 Me initiative convened a task force in spring of 2014 to engage in a visioning process for preventing and ending youth homelessness in Cuyahoga County, with a special emphasis on youth in foster care. The task force was encouraged to think creatively and freely without concern for funding or logistical constraints. The group developed a set of simple guiding principles that reflected this charge and allowed it to envision an ideal system of supports for serving homeless and unstably housed youth.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

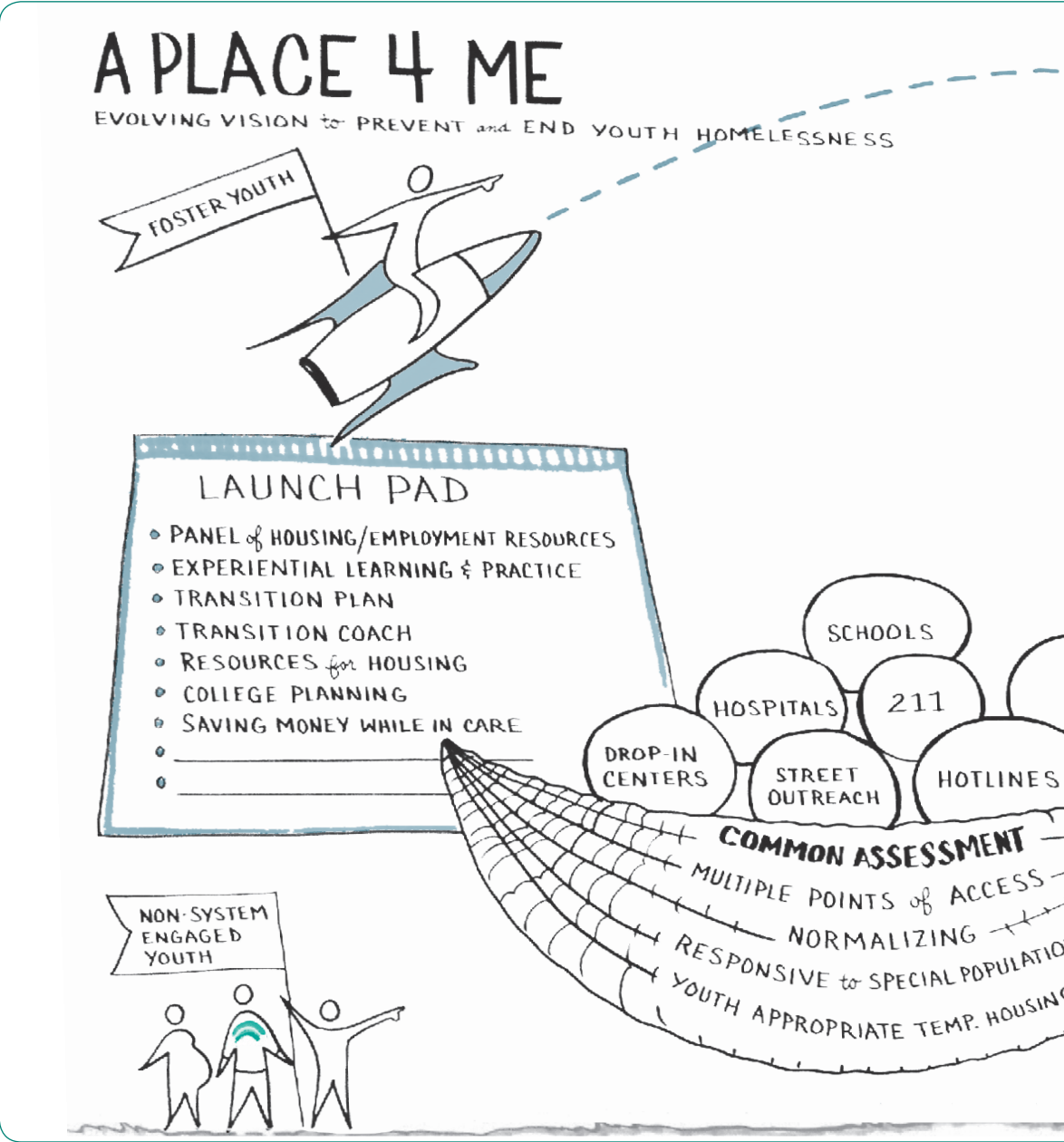
- **Think creatively.**
- **Imagine how systems for both youth and adults collaborate to seamlessly serve youth in transition.**
- **Elevate the voice and perspective of youth we are hoping to serve: “Nothing about us without us.”**

**Collective Impact. FSG Inc.*

The task force met from April to June of 2014 and worked with a graphic recorder to illustrate the vision for preventing and ending youth homelessness. This vision was presented on June 23, 2014, at a community convening of nearly 150 stakeholders, including leadership from the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, the National Alliance to End Homelessness, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

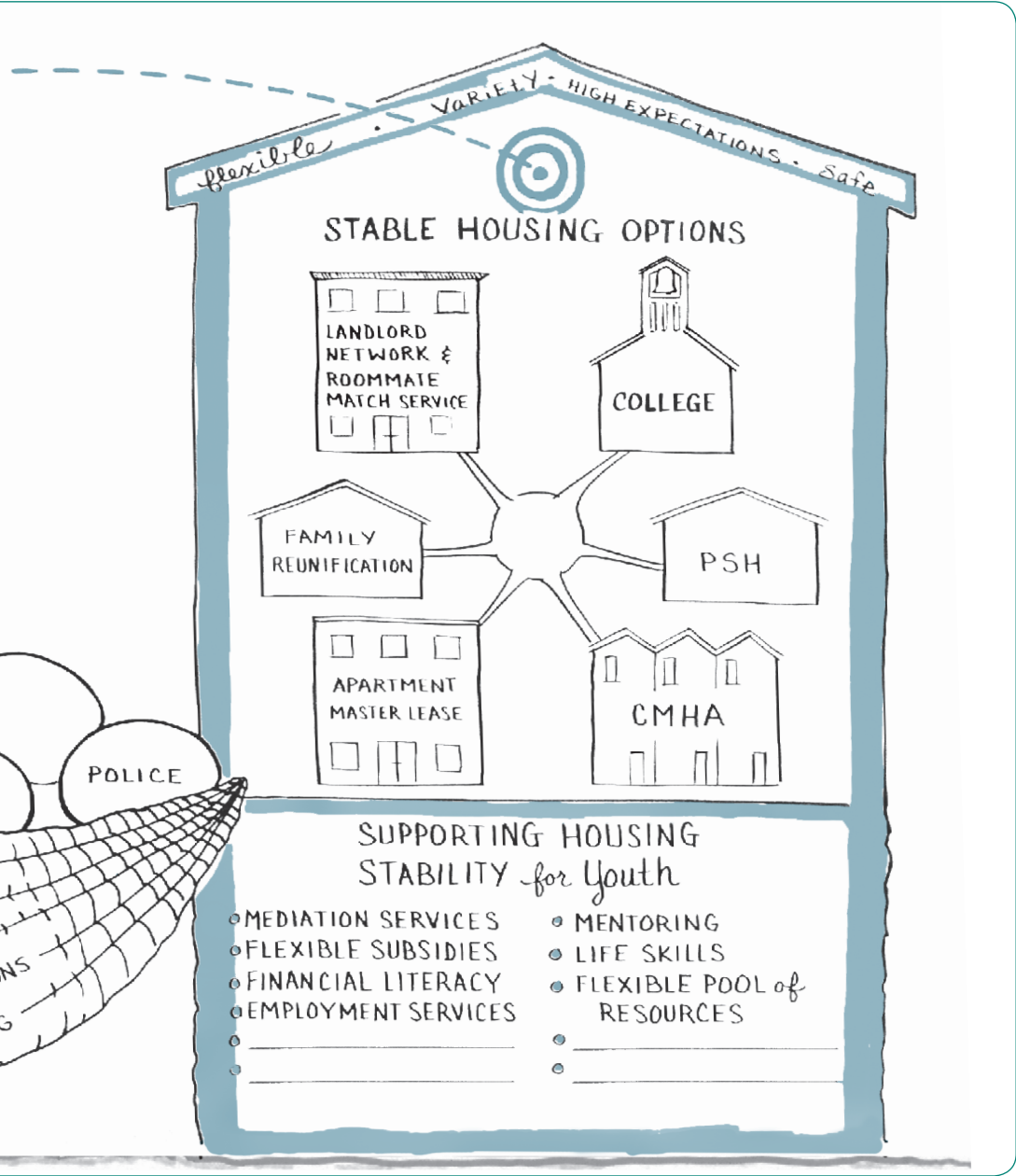
Youth who had engaged in the process co-presented the vision, which revealed the need for additional planning in four key areas:

- 1 The safety net to identify and connect youth in housing crisis
- 2 Stable housing to increase availability of developmentally appropriate housing options for youth



- 3 Supportive services to help youth maintain stable housing
- 4 The “launch pad” to support young people transitioning from foster care to adulthood

At the conclusion of the June 23 convening, all participants were asked to sign up to join one of four planning teams to delve into these issues more deeply. The teams would convene in August.



PHASE 2: Community Planning —
August 2014 to May 2015

The 10-month planning process began in August of 2014 and wrapped up in May of 2015, with all four planning teams meeting on a regular basis. The process engaged nearly 70 individuals from more than 30 public and private partner agencies.

Grounded in the community vision that had been presented in June of 2014, the planning teams brainstormed strategies for new or improved programs, better coordination of resources and services, and ways to overcome systemic obstacles and barriers for effectively reaching and serving youth in crisis. In some cases, the planning teams divided into subcommittees to further explore and build out a strategy, such as coordinated engagement, family reunification and foster care transition planning. The teams researched best practices and models from other communities and held conference calls to learn from colleagues in other states who have implemented innovative and effective services to better meet the needs of youth.

The planning process was informed by currently available child welfare and homeless services data.

But more importantly, the process was critically shaped by the experiences and perspectives of young people on each of the planning teams.

Intentional effort was made to ensure that at least one young person attended every planning team meeting. All of the youth engaged in the process had aged out of foster care and many had experienced homelessness or significant housing instability. They were not just asked to share their experiences but also their ideas for what would have helped them during their most challenging times. Their voices are reflected in the strategies contained within this plan.

PARTICIPATION IN THE
PLANNING PROCESS

70
people

30
partner
organizations



55 planning meetings
(August 2014 to May 2015)



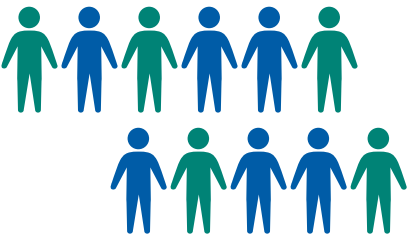
4



planning
teams



11 youth participants

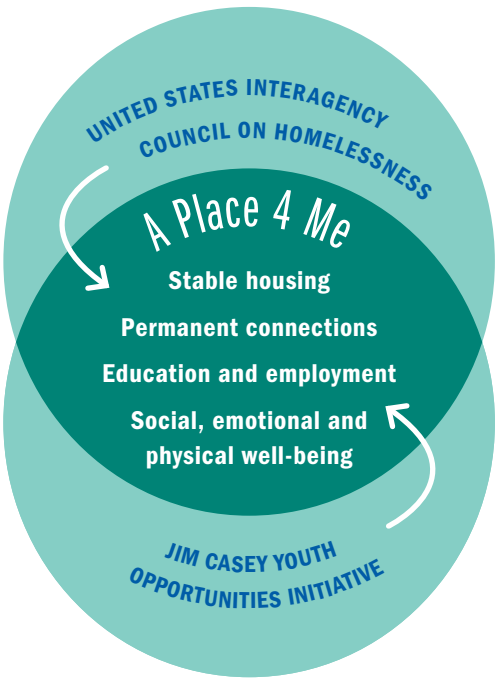


Our Intended Outcomes

Two national models have guided our work: the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative Framework and the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) Framework to End Youth Homelessness (released in February 2013). A Place 4 Me has incorporated key strategies from each of these models, including youth engagement, community partnership, capacity building and data quality.

Both frameworks prioritize subpopulations of youth who are particularly vulnerable for housing instability and often overrepresented among homeless youth. As such, the strategic plan includes strategies specifically designed to address the unique needs of youth who are system involved (child welfare, juvenile justice, etc.), LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender and questioning), and/or pregnant and parenting. The A Place 4 Me initiative also has a racial equity focus to address the overrepresentation of youth of color among the foster care and homeless populations.

Though distinct frameworks, with one geared toward child welfare systems change (Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative) and one geared toward homeless services systems change (USICH), both seek the same outcomes for youth, namely: stable housing; permanent connections (emotional permanence); education and employment; and social, emotional and physical well-being.



Grounded in the Jim Casey and USICH frameworks, the strategic plan intends to achieve these core outcomes for all homeless and unstably housed youth in Cuyahoga County. A young person’s ability to maintain stable housing is supported by his or her connection to caring adults and peers, education and job resources, and overall well-being. The strategies recommended in this plan comprehensively address these outcome areas. A Place 4 Me also works to enhance the financial capability and social capital of youth through the Jim Casey Opportunity Passport™ program (see supportive services.)

Our Challenge

Each year, approximately 120 youth age out of foster care in Cuyahoga County. An “aged-out” youth has reached the legal age of majority in the state of Ohio (18 years) and is emancipated or terminated from the custody of the Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS). In some cases, a young person can remain in DCFS custody until the age of 21 if he or she is enrolled in high school and/or has developmental disabilities.

Youth who age out of foster care often lack the emotional and material support of a family as they transition to adulthood. They face many challenges, including homelessness and housing instability.

40% of former foster youth experience homelessness or housing instability before their 24th birthday.

Those in foster care are **5x** more likely to show up in the homeless system than their non-foster care involved peers.

Efforts are currently under way to get a better understanding of how many former foster youth become homeless or unstably housed in Cuyahoga County. A recent study by the Center on Urban Poverty at Case Western Reserve University shows that among a cohort of high school students in the Cleveland Metropolitan School District, those in foster care are five times more likely to show up in the homeless system than their non-foster care involved peers. A well-regarded multi-state longitudinal study has found that nearly 40% of former foster youth experience homelessness or housing instability before their 24th birthday.*

* Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth. Chapin Hall. 2011.

THE FACES OF YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

TINA, 23

Tina has three children, ages 4, 2 and 3 months. She never finished high school, and she and her children have been living with an elderly relative. The relative was recently accepted into public senior housing and — per agency rules — Tina and her children cannot come. They stayed with friends and family members for a few months until they exhausted all their resources and have no one left. Tina cannot meet her children's medical and educational needs. They now stay in a family shelter.

ROBBY, 20

Robby entered foster care when he was 4 years old. Before aging out at 18, he had 17 different placements in 14 years. His transition plan for housing after he aged out was to stay with a foster parent and pay rent. When that foster parent took in a large sibling group there was no room for Robby and he had to leave. He stayed briefly with his birth mom, various friends and his birth dad. When he had nowhere to go, he went to the airport and public parks. Eventually, Robby entered an emergency shelter.

SAM, 17

Carla was born a female. When she was 14, she came out to friends and family as a lesbian and was accepted. Shortly after, Carla began to question her gender identity and came out as a male. Carla took a new name — Sam — and worked hard to complete high school. Sam was rejected by family and friends, was kicked out of his home and began couch surfing to avoid the streets and the homeless shelters. Sam has put his plans to attend college in the fall on hold and is unable to find steady employment. He continues to couch surf and is frustrated that nothing in his life seems stable.

Our Challenge (cont.)

Efforts to obtain reliable data on the broader population of homeless and unstably housed youth (regardless of foster care involvement) are not without challenges. Youth experiencing homelessness or housing instability often “couch surf,” frequently moving from place to place. They are an elusive population that is difficult to reach with traditional counting methodologies that rely on clients proactively presenting themselves for homeless services. In many cases, these youth may not even think of themselves as homeless or unstably housed and may not be classified by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) definition of literally homeless. However, youth’s dependence on friends and acquaintances for a place to stay leaves them particularly vulnerable to manipulation, victimization and engagement in risky behavior in exchange for a couch to sleep on.

Count of “Literally Homeless” Youth ages 18 to 24

A report from the Cuyahoga County Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) shows that 328 unaccompanied youth ages 18 to 24 accessed emergency shelter during the period of January 1, 2015, to June 19, 2015, and 54 of these youth were young heads of household with children. An additional 87 youth were in transitional housing programs during this same period. These are unduplicated counts. Youth in emergency shelter and transitional housing are defined as literally homeless by HUD. These numbers do not reflect *unsheltered* youth living in a place not meant for human habitation (i.e. car, abandoned building, etc.).

For a more reliable number on homeless youth, including those who are unsheltered, HMIS reports that during this same time period, 513 youth ages 18 to 24 received services through the Cuyahoga County

Of **328** unaccompanied youth in emergency shelter, **54** were young heads of household with children.*

Of **513** youth who received homeless services, **121** had children with them.*

Continuum of Care, which coordinates a range of programs available to assist homeless individuals and families. This includes youth in emergency shelters, transitional housing and various outreach programs to unsheltered populations. About one-fourth of these youth (121) have children with them.

Count of Unstably Housed Youth

The HMIS data are limited in that they only reflect youth who meet the HUD definition of literally homeless. These data do not include youth who are couch surfing or otherwise unstably housed. They also do not include any youth under the age of 18.

Given the elusive and complex nature of youth homelessness, these additional data will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of this problem in Cuyahoga County.

Through implementation of new and innovative counting methodologies and integration of public data systems, we hope to advance a more accurate understanding of homeless and unstably housed youth in our community.

* HMIS Data for youth ages 18 to 24 from January 1, 2015, to June 19, 2015 in Cuyahoga County.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Aged out — Refers to youth in foster care who are still in the system upon reaching the legal age of majority (currently 18 in the state of Ohio) and have not been adopted or reunified with their birth families. Youth who are still enrolled in high school and/or have developmental disabilities can remain in foster care until the age of 21. Age out is used interchangeably with “emancipate” or “terminate” from foster care.

Centralized or coordinated assessment — A process designed to coordinate program participant intake, assessment and provision of referrals.

Chronically homeless (as defined by HUD) — An individual or family with a disabling condition who has been continuously homeless for a year or more, or has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years.

Literally homeless (as defined by HUD) — An individual or family with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground OR an individual or family living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or government programs) OR an individual who is exiting an institution where he or she resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution.

Unaccompanied youth — Youth up to age 24 who are unaccompanied by a parent, legal guardian or spouse.

Unstably housed — Youth who perceive that they cannot stay or do not know if they can stay where they slept last night for the next month. This excludes youth living in emergency shelter or transitional housing as well as youth living in a place not meant for human habitation, as these youth would be defined as homeless.

Our plan utilizes a broad definition of **HOUSING INSTABILITY**. We prioritize the needs of youth ages 14 to 24 in Cuyahoga County who are unaccompanied by a parent, legal guardian or spouse, and lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence.



THE STRATEGIC PLAN

Our Goals

The A Place 4 Me initiative has developed a strategic plan, including core goals and creative strategies, to prevent and end youth homelessness in Cuyahoga County. The following goals grow from and correspond to the four planning areas identified through the community visioning process.



Goal 1: THE SAFETY NET

Strengthen the safety net to identify, assess and connect youth in housing crisis



Goal 2: STABLE HOUSING

Expand a continuum of age-appropriate, stable housing options to meet the diverse needs of youth



Goal 3: SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

Provide a network of trauma-informed supportive services to help young people maintain stable housing



Goal 4: THE LAUNCH PAD

Support internal efforts by the Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services to build a “launch pad” that helps foster youth transition to stable housing and provides a safe landing if and when they need to return for help

The goals and related strategies are intended to achieve our outcomes for stable housing; permanent connections; education and employment; and social, emotional and physical well being for youth.



GOAL 1: THE SAFETY NET

Strengthen the safety net to identify, assess and connect youth in housing crisis

STRATEGY A – Coordinated Engagement

Coordinate engagement of homeless and unstably housed youth through implementation of a common assessment tool. Assessment of a young person’s foster care history, LGBT status, potential for family reunification, etc. will ensure appropriate referrals to service and housing resources available in the community. A standardized process across providers also ensures that there are multiple points of entry and no “wrong door” for vulnerable youth in need of services.

STRATEGY B – Family Reunification

Implement a new family reunification intervention for homeless and unstably housed youth. When safe and appropriate to do so, every effort should be made to re-connect a young person to his or her family. The intervention will have a focus (though not exclusively) on LGBTQ youth who may have become homeless or unstably housed as a result of family conflict over his or her sexual orientation.

STRATEGY C – Resource Identification and Access

Facilitate efforts to increase awareness of and access to the resources and services available to homeless and unstably housed youth. Explore the use of technology and/or social media to support young people’s connections to community-based resources.

STRATEGY D – Temporary housing/Host home model

Explore opportunities to expand temporary housing options to serve youth in housing crisis. Host homes – or other temporary housing models – are used in some communities as a positive and safe alternative to emergency shelters. A limited inventory of temporary housing can be used in a flexible manner to meet the short-term, immediate housing needs of youth in transition to more stable housing.

PROGRESS!

The Cleveland Mediation Center has begun planning work to develop a new Youth and Family Reunification program. The program will engage young adults ages 18 to 24 who are homeless or unstably housed to facilitate family reunification between clients and those they have identified as wanting to connect to and build supports with. The Cleveland Mediation Center will work with other partners who engage with youth in the safety net to develop the structure, logistics, partnerships and referral processes for the Youth and Family Reunification program.



GOAL 2: STABLE HOUSING

Expand a continuum of age-appropriate, stable housing options to meet the diverse needs of youth

STRATEGY A – Residential post-secondary opportunities

Expand current efforts to connect college-ready homeless and unstably housed students with residential post-secondary opportunities, on-campus supports and break housing. Explore a partnership with DCFS to create a pipeline to college for foster youth. College Now of Greater Cleveland has developed and piloted a successful program to connect homeless and unstably housed youth to college while supporting their on-campus housing needs.

STRATEGY B – Housing location and stabilization supports

Create an infrastructure to help youth with low barriers to housing find and maintain housing on the private market. Living in an apartment (with or without a roommate) is a developmentally appropriate way for young people to live. These youth should be supported to find safe and affordable housing from landlords willing to rent to them. Ongoing engagement with the landlord will proactively identify and address any issues that may threaten the young tenant’s housing stability.

STRATEGY C – Nonprofit affordable housing development

Engage local nonprofit organizations, including churches, to acquire real estate through the county land bank and develop housing opportunities for homeless and unstably housed youth and/or youth who have aged out of foster care.

STRATEGY D – Public housing

Support the partnership between DCFS and the Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority to fast-track public housing applications of youth ages 18 to 21 who have aged out of foster care. Through implementation of the common assessment, ensure that eligible youth (aged out of foster care and between the ages of 18 to 21) are referred to DCFS to begin the public housing application process. With DCFS, establish a process to prioritize youth with a history of homelessness and instability for this resource.

STRATEGY E – Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) for chronically homeless youth

Integrate services and resources developed through this planning effort to support the housing stability of chronically homeless youth in permanent supportive housing. PSH serves the highest-need youth – those who are chronically homeless. While case management is offered to youth in PSH, intentional effort should be made to connect them to other age-appropriate supports created as a result of this plan.



GOAL 3: SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

Provide a network of trauma-informed supportive services to help young people maintain stable housing

OUR PHILOSOPHY

This strategic plan to prevent and end youth homelessness is grounded in a housing first approach, which centers on connecting people with housing as quickly as possible and then offering services as needed. Homelessness and housing instability are traumatic experiences, and every night spent on the street, in a shelter or moving from couch to couch increases the likelihood of victimization.

Consistent with the housing first approach, this plan prioritizes efforts to reduce the length of time spent homeless by providing permanent, affordable housing without conditions like sobriety or service participation. Case management and other supportive services are offered — not mandated — to promote housing stability and individual well-being on an as-needed basis.

The following supportive service strategies are intended to promote housing stability, but there is no requirement that youth engage in services.

Source: Housing First, National Alliance to End Homelessness

STRATEGY A — Transition support services/ case management

Develop a service model to support young people during the critical transition to independent housing. Regardless of the type of housing (public, private, on-campus, etc.), young people who have never lived independently should have access to short-term supports to ensure basic independent living skills and housing stability. Critical Time Intervention (CTI) was recommended given the flexibility, limited duration and housing focus of the model. CTI can be integrated with the Transition to Independence Process (TIP) model to be delivered in a developmentally appropriate manner.

These services will be available to all youth regardless of mental health diagnosis. (The lack of services and supports for youth without a mental health diagnosis was identified as a key gap in the planning effort.) For youth in foster care, CTI can begin while they are still in care to assess their needs related to housing.

STRATEGY B — Mentoring

Create an infrastructure to connect homeless, unstably housed and aged-out youth to a network of mentors in the community. This can include one-to-one mentoring or a group-mentoring model, such as Open Table. Work with existing providers of mentoring to expand and extend mentoring opportunities to vulnerable youth.

STRATEGY C – Tenant education and tenant-landlord mediation

Provide education on the rights and responsibilities of tenancy to all youth transitioning to stable housing. This tenant education would supplement – not replace – any training required by the landlord (CMHA, private landlord, etc.). Support would be available on an ongoing basis to provide mediation in situations of tenant-landlord dispute in order to stabilize housing.

STRATEGY D – Youth employment

Explore the use of newly designated state and federal resources to connect unengaged youth to employment opportunities. Create an infrastructure to provide job training, employment search and placement, and ongoing support to help homeless, unstably housed, and aged-out youth maintain employment.

STRATEGY E – Financial capability/Opportunity Passport™

Support full implementation of Opportunity Passport™, the programmatic component of the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative that provides matched savings accounts for youth currently in or aged-out of foster care. Youth enrolled in Opportunity Passport™ receive training on financial capability, including budgeting, banking, etc.

STRATEGY F – Flexible resources

Grow a flexible pool of resources to support the housing and developmental needs of youth. The funds will be used in emergency situations to avoid or shorten an experience of homelessness (i.e. rental and utility arrears, first month's rent and security deposit, damages to a unit. Funds could also be used to support the emerging needs of homeless, unstably housed and aged-out youth (i.e. new clothing for a job interview or other important function, books or training materials for school or vocational programs, etc.).

PROGRESS!

In May of 2015, the flexible pool of resources was established with funds from the Give Back Gang, Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland and a memorial fund created in honor of Terrell Howard, a young man who was integrally involved in this planning process. Numerous individuals and organizations donated to the fund in memory of Terrell and in support of homeless and unstably housed youth.

PROGRESS!

In June 2015, Opportunity Passport™ officially launched with the enrollment of 20 youth.



GOAL 4: THE LAUNCH PAD

Support internal efforts by the Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services to build a “launch pad” that helps foster youth transition to stable housing and provides a safe landing if and when they need to return for help

STRATEGY A –

Youth-driven, inclusive transition planning

DCFS will explore opportunities to enhance the review/transition planning process for youth in independent living. Efforts will be made to empower and invite the young person to lead his or her transition planning meetings. At the request of the young person, DCFS will invite community partners to the meetings to support his or her successful transition to adulthood (i.e. housing, education, employment, etc.).

STRATEGY B – Emancipation Unit

DCFS will build the capacity of the newly created “emancipation unit” to serve as a resource for youth who have aged out of care. The emancipation unit will proactively follow up with recently aged-out youth on a quarterly basis for up to one year post-emancipation. It will also be responsible for opening FINS (families in need of assistance) cases for aged-out youth up until the age of 21. Eligible youth will more effectively be identified and referred to the emancipation unit through the common assessment tool.

STRATEGY C – 696-KIDS Hotline

DCFS will enhance the 696-KIDS hotline caller options and triaging mechanisms to facilitate appropriate and timely referral of aged-out youth to the emancipation unit. Aged-out youth or providers looking to open a FINS case on behalf

of an aged-out youth use the hotline to connect to the emancipation unit, however the current options are difficult to navigate. This strategy will enhance navigation for youth and providers to connect to the emancipation unit.

STRATEGY D – Electronic repository of personal documentation/identification

DCFS will plan to better support youths’ access to personal documentation and identification, including birth certificates, social security cards, court documents and state-issued IDs. While youth are discharged from custody with these documents, they are often misplaced, lost or stolen, especially if a young person moves frequently or experiences housing instability. Without this documentation, youth are unable to open bank accounts, apply for housing, enroll in school, etc. DCFS will explore the possibility of creating an electronic repository to hold this information.

STRATEGY E – The Purple Umbrella

DCFS will launch the Purple Umbrella Initiative to provide education to local nonprofits, businesses, churches and others about the unique challenges and opportunities facing youth in foster care. The initiative will identify various resources and supports for foster youth and use a Purple Umbrella icon to designate that a business or organization is foster-youth friendly.



WHAT'S NEXT?

Our Momentum

This plan represents the best thinking of the planning partners and documents the 20 most promising strategies generated through this process to prevent and end youth homelessness. It cannot, however, capture the richness and energy of the planning teams and the dedication and commitment our partners have poured into this plan.

The strategic plan gives us a starting place, a springboard for continued momentum toward implementing these strategies. Over the next six to 12 months, here's what you can expect:

- Prioritization of the 20 strategies to determine where first to invest resources, time and energy for the greatest benefit to homeless and unstably housed youth. While all 20 strategies are important, they cannot be implemented all at once and thoughtful prioritization will be essential moving forward.
- Development of detailed action plans for implementing the priority strategies. These plans will include implementation partner roles, timelines, targeted population to be served, funding recommendations and evaluation criteria to learn from this work and monitor progress toward core outcomes.
- Identification of resources — public and private — to implement the strategies.
- Development of a community advisory board to oversee and guide implementation of the strategies. The board will include youth and young adults to monitor progress toward implementing the strategic plan. Opportunities to sign up to stay engaged will be provided.
- Ongoing communication to stakeholders.

Thank you to the many partners who have brought us to this place. And, thank you to those who will join in this effort to implement these strategies to improve outcomes for homeless and unstably housed youth.

Together, we can achieve our vision of a community where every young person belongs and has a place to call home.

Steering Committee

YWCA Greater Cleveland
Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services
FrontLine Service
Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative
Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland

Partners

Adoption Network Cleveland
AIDS Taskforce of Greater Cleveland
Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services
(ADAMHS) Board of Cuyahoga County
AmeriCorps
Beech Brook
Bellefaire JCB
Broken Connections Inc.
Case Western Reserve University
Catholic Charities Bishop William M. Cosgrove Center
Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library
Cleveland Housing Network
Cleveland Mediation Center
Cleveland Metropolitan School District Project Act
Cleveland Neighborhood Progress
Cleveland Public Library
Cleveland State University
College Now Greater Cleveland
Cuyahoga Community College
Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services
Cuyahoga County Family and Children First Council
Cuyahoga County Jobs and Family Services
Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court
Cuyahoga County Neighborhood Collaboratives
Cuyahoga County Office of Homeless Services
Cuyahoga County Sheriff's Department
Cuyahoga Health Access Partnership
Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority
EDEN Inc.
Enterprise Community Partners
Family Promise of Greater Cleveland
Federal Trade Commission
FirstMerit Bank
Fostering the SOUL Ministry
FrontLine Service
Greater Cleveland Food Bank
In Focus of Cleveland Inc.
KeyBank
Legal Aid Society of Cleveland

Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Community Center
of Greater Cleveland
Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry
MetroHealth System
National Council of Jewish Women
Neighborhood Housing Services of Greater Cleveland
Ohio Guidestone
Ohio Means Jobs
Ohio Reach
Ohio State Extension
Open Table
PEP Connections
The Purple Project
SAFY
Starting Point
Teen Advocate Group Youth Council
United Way 2-1-1
University Settlement
Volunteers of America of Greater Ohio
Waiting Child Fund
West Side Catholic Center
Youth Opportunities Unlimited (Y.O.U.)
YWCA Greater Cleveland

Funders

Butler Family Fund
Cleveland Foundation
The Give Back Gang
The George Gund Foundation
Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative
Saint Luke's Foundation
Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland

Youth Contributors

Michael Bolwaire
Anna Duncan
Terrell Howard
Dominique Jefferson
Tasha Jones
Terrisha Peoples
Miranda Styles
AsiaRae Wells
ReGine Wells
Justin Williams
Candace Woodland

For more information:

- Kate Lodge, program director, A Place 4 Me
klodge@ywcaofcleveland.org
- YWCA of Greater Cleveland: A Place 4 Me
bit.ly/aplace4me
- Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative
www.jimcaseyyouth.org
- Ohio Fostering Connections Task Force
www.ohiofosteringconnections.org
- Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland
www.socfcleveland.org

A PLACE 4 ME

