



Framework to Inform the  
New Jersey Department of  
Children and Families'  
Youth At-Risk of Homelessness  
(YARH) Plan to Prevent Youth  
Homelessness

As presented by CSH to the New Jersey Department  
of Children and Families, Office of Adolescent  
Services

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## About CSH

For over 20 years, CSH has been the national champion for supportive housing, demonstrating its potential to improve the lives of very vulnerable individuals and families. CSH has earned an award-winning reputation as a highly effective, financially stable organization, with strong partnerships across government, community organizations, foundations, and financial institutions. CSH is advancing solutions, using housing as a platform for services as an intervention to improve lives, maximize public resources, and build healthy communities. CSH is working to assure supportive housing is accessible to more people in more places. Find us at [www.csh.org](http://www.csh.org)

## Acknowledgements

CSH wishes to acknowledge all those who participated in conversations and discussions that helped to shape this document and the Charrette process with special thanks to the Charrette Steering Committee and YARH Steering Committee members. The Charrette also couldn't have been possible without staff volunteers (listed on page 19) who assisted in facilitation and recording on the day of.

## Inquiries

If you are interested in learning more about the Youth At-Risk of Homelessness Planning Initiative, please contact Jessica Trombetta at [Jessica.Trombetta@dcf.state.nj.us](mailto:Jessica.Trombetta@dcf.state.nj.us). For information on CSH, please visit [www.csh.org](http://www.csh.org) for additional on-line resources and materials. If you have questions or comments regarding this document, please contact Erin Burns-Maine at [Erin.Burns-Maine@csh.org](mailto:Erin.Burns-Maine@csh.org).

Framework to Inform the NJ Department of Children and Families Youth At-Risk of Homelessness (YARH) Plan to Prevent Youth Homelessness

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## Introduction

CSH is pleased to present this report to the Office of Adolescent Services of the New Jersey Department of Children and Families (DCF). Committing to conduct a thorough, thoughtful, and intentional review of strategies to assess, plan, and implement more comprehensive solutions to end youth homelessness specifically those with experience in the child welfare system is risky. To do it in an open and authentic manner is laudable. CSH witnessed this throughout the process and hopes that the same authenticity comes through in this document.

CSH appreciates the willingness of the NJ Department of Children and Families, Office of Adolescent Services to undertake the Charrette process as a method of analyzing, discerning, and ultimately making difficult decisions about moving forward on complicated issues.

This report is intended to inform the next body of work under the four issue areas identified and examined through this process; to lay a framework for the next level of work under the Youth At-Risk of Homelessness - Connecting YOUth planning grant; and to increase the success of the work happening in New Jersey.

## Success in Preventing Youth Homelessness to Date

DCF recognizes that in order to prevent risk for homelessness, more work needs to be done to provide sustainable supports and services for and with those Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P) involved youth that enter out of home placement and subsequently exit to permanency or age out. New Jersey continues to have youth age out of the child welfare system that experience homelessness, economic instability, and repeat patterns of unhealthy lifestyles similar to those that they had initially been removed from as a child.

DCF through the award of the Youth At-Risk of Homelessness federal planning grant, is undertaking a statewide analysis, assessment, and planning process to develop an intervention framework (modeled on the Opening Doors framework developed by the U. S. Interagency Council on Homelessness) that will provide a holistic approach to ensuring that youth who enter or are in the care of DCP&P ages 14-17, those aging out of the child welfare system that are 18-21, and youth up to 21 that have experienced time in care and are now homeless are provided with the necessary resources they need to achieve housing stability, permanency, well-being, and educational/employment goals. Through this Phase I planning grant DCF's six objectives in a two-part process are:

1. Complete a data sharing, collection, and analysis of youth in care data at all three engagement points (14-17, aging out 18-21, and youth with previous experience in care up to 21) to better understand risk and protective factors and underlying needs. (Phase I-Part 1)
2. Complete a needs assessment of practices and services to understand array and structure, including improving use of an assessment process to match individual youth strengths and needs to resources and services (Phase I-Part 1)
3. Conduct research to build the knowledge base including a scan of evidence-based/evidence-trauma informed programs and practices of the field. (Phase I-Part 1)
4. Translate this knowledge into a revised theory of change and a logic model for a model intervention or framework to reduce homelessness risk. (Phase I-Part 2)

5. Identify several potential partners to implement the model that has been developed based on the logic model and theory of change. (Phase I-Part 2)
6. Communicate and synthesize information about our findings from the initial knowledge-building activities to the field, which will enable other programs and developers to improve their interventions. (Phase I-Part 2)

DCF, with help from its partners on the grant, will create an achievable intervention framework that will bring various systems, partners, and resources together in a coordinated and informed way in order to better serve these youth that are experiencing or have experienced time in care. Subsequently, this new framework will also positively impact other vulnerable youth in the community that are experiencing homelessness who never experienced time in care through the child welfare system. The potential impact of this intervention framework strategy will contribute to New Jersey's efforts to end youth homelessness by 2020.

## The Charrette Process

To condense planning time while involving a broad range of stakeholders, the NJ Department of Children and Families engaged CSH to facilitate this work using the CSH Charrette process. This process is specifically designed to help communities address key issues in ending homelessness at the local level. Similar to a traditional architectural Charrette, the CSH Charrette provides a fast-paced but thorough exploration of the critical aspects of developing plans and action steps. These Charrettes capitalize on local and external expertise as well as the community organizing principle of engaging stakeholders in a dynamic process.



The goal of this Charrette was focused on preventing and addressing youth homelessness and provided an initial opportunity to jumpstart and streamline the development of a collaborative community plan detailing a feasible set of recommendations to advise/revise the preliminary intervention framework model that had been proposed in the YARH Planning Grant Proposal. This report completes the Charrette process, and allows the YARH Steering Committee to begin the process of developing an action plan leading to implementation.

## Steering Committee

To jump start the work of the Charrette Steering Committee, the YARH Steering Committee identified the four (4) key focus areas for the Charrette; Housing Options, Housing Specific Populations, Permanency and Education and Training. The Charrette Steering Committee was formalized on August 27, 2014 and came together following a kick-off meeting on September 4, 2014. Weekly conference calls were scheduled for the next seven weeks to expand issue areas, identify community outreach targets, and help secure experts. (See Appendix A for list of Committee members and Charrette participants)

## The Charrette

The Charrette was held on Thursday, October 30, 2014 with a full day of intense dialogue at the DCF Training Academy in New Brunswick. The conversation focused on four issue areas:

- Housing Options
- Housing Specific Populations
- Permanency
- Education and Training

Each conversation occurred in a “fishbowl” setting with a group of experts sitting in a circle surrounded by an outer circle of community stakeholders. For the first hour, the local and external experts engaged in a dialogue that encouraged thinking of new systemic and programmatic responses in the issue areas. Experts from diverse communities and organizations drew from their experiences and expertise to exchange views and craft suggestions for moving forward. (A full list of experts is in Appendix B)

While the expert dialogue occurred, the rest of the Charrette participants observed the discussion without comment. Halfway through, the conversation among the experts ended and CSH and DCF facilitated audience observations and feedback. During this time, the experts were not allowed to respond, and community members were given ample opportunity to agree with or challenge the experts and to offer other suggestions on the issue areas. The purpose of this part of each fishbowl session was to engage a broad range of community members in the discussion and benefit from their expertise and experiences.

## Recommendation Ranking

Following the intensive public process, CSH distilled the information into draft recommendations for each of the four issue areas. This was presented at a YARH Steering Committee meeting on November 24, 2014. At this meeting CSH heard input on how well the recommendations did or did not reflect the learnings from the Charrette process. It was the recommendation of the YARH Steering Committee to regroup and clarify the recommendations and to then have the Charrette Steering Committee rank each focus area recommendations. Subsequent to the Charrette Steering Committee rankings, CSH also solicited this feedback from additional Charrette participants including Charrette Experts. CSH created a ranking tool which allowed Committee members to score the level to which each recommendation was important, actionable, and within the goals of YARH. A total of 38 rankings were received and combined with comments from those who attended as well as the full YARH Steering Committee. The recommendations that received an average rating of four (4) or greater in all three domains described in the ranking tool were selected as final recommendations. CSH staff incorporated the feedback in this final report to be presented at the YARH Steering Committee meeting on January 26, 2015.

“Some youth need immediate housing arrangements, like subsidized apartment living or an emergency bed. Some require specific drug and mental health treatments. Other youth would benefit more from programs in schools or community-based settings aimed at developing skills, competencies, and positive connections with adults and communities. For some young people, especially minors, providing interventions that strengthen family supports is a critical way to improve permanent connections and stable housing. And the circumstances of many youth require comprehensive service strategies, including different combinations and sequences of housing, treatment, school and community programming, and/or family supports.”

- Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative (2013). A Guide to Support the Implementation of Foster Care Beyond Age 18. St. Louis, MO.

## Recommendations

These recommendations represent ideas presented in the fishbowl sessions that will have the most impact developing the NJ Department of Children and Families Plan to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness.

### Issue Area Action Items

#### 1. Housing Options

Nationally, youth aging out of the child welfare system become homeless at an alarming rate. In fact, a 2008 data match conducted in New York City revealed that nearly 21% of young adults annually discharged from foster care enter the City's shelter system within three years.<sup>1</sup> Homeless youth, sometimes referred to as

unaccompanied youth, are individuals who lack parental, foster or institutional care.<sup>2</sup> The National Runaway Switchboard estimates

that on any given night there are approximately 1.3 million homeless youth living unsupervised on the streets, in abandoned buildings, with friends or with strangers. Homeless youth are at a higher risk for physical abuse, sexual exploitation, mental health disabilities, substance abuse, and death. It is estimated that 5,000 unaccompanied youth die each year as a result of assault, illness, or suicide.<sup>3</sup> Large numbers of young people who are transitioning from foster care to adulthood, as well as runaway youth, lack the safe and affordable housing that require. Young people who have been homeless prior to entering care are at a higher risk of homelessness than their peers. We also know that those young adults with a history of couch surfing are also at a higher risk for homelessness.

*“When someone is stably housed we see that many of their other issues seem to disappear”.*

*---Charrette Participant*

#### Key Questions Discussed

- What are the current access points for youth who are homeless or at risk for being homeless and how do we expand those current access points?
- What administrative barriers of PSH funders and programs can be changed to facilitate faster entry and placement into permanent supportive housing and/or affordable housing?
- What strategies could New Jersey put in place to coordinate funding to develop and operate permanent supportive housing and other affordable housing options?
- How can we leverage the existing system of beds to reconfigure for capacity for youth? How do we conduct outreach to ensure youth access resources available in our system?
- How and when do we begin the conversation and steps to “move on” from program housing to affordable independent housing? What is required make this move?
- What is the role of private market housing?
- What is the role of a Public Housing Authority?

<sup>1</sup> 2008 Administrative data match. New York City Administration for Children's Services and the Department of Homeless Services

<sup>2</sup> Organizations define homeless and runaway youth differently. For example, the National Alliance to End Homeless defines homeless youth as unaccompanied individuals ages 12 to 24, while the National Coalition for the Homeless defines homeless youth as individuals under the age of 18.

<sup>3</sup> The terms "homeless" and "runaway" are used interchangeably as both groups lack adequate shelter and are at a greater risk of engaging in dangerous behaviors while living on the streets.

## Housing Options Recommendations:

*Please see the “Recommendation Rankings” section on page 6 for more information on how recommendations for each issue area were prioritized.*

- 1.1 Identify developers who build affordable housing and undertake targeted outreach to those developers to increase partnerships with the goal of creating youth set asides within larger affordable housing developments.
- 1.2 Enhance services and prioritize development of additional units of housing for parenting youth.
- 1.3 Identify the number of emergency beds needed throughout the state and develop policies and practices to ensure immediate access to beds and services.
- 1.4 Pattern a rental assistance program after the NJ Department of Human Services/Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services rental subsidy program
- 1.5 Develop and enact policies that ensure the smooth transition of youth to the adult human service system, when necessary, in a coordinated and timely manner.
- 1.6 Identify, develop and publicize homeless entry points for at risk youth that are consistent across the state.
- 1.7 Create common definitions of homelessness that are agreed upon by state and county offices.
- 1.8 Create common definitions and standards for program models, including Permanent Supportive Housing, permanent housing, transitional housing, and emergency shelter.
- 1.9 Enhance the Adolescent Housing Hub to become a conduit to direct youth toward housing and services. Publicize centralized phone number.
- 1.10 Development of web based youth resource directory that youth may access 24/7.
- 1.11 Develop standards of care for follow-up services for youth who transition out of DCF funded programs coupled with the necessary funding for provider agencies when needed.
- 1.12 Enhance services and prioritize development of additional units of housing for parenting youth.

## 2. Housing-Specific Populations:

The transition from adolescence to adulthood is a challenging time. It is a time in which the young person is called upon to make complex decisions about schooling, work, finances, and personal relationships. Housing is an important part of the service mix and providers must retool their delivery system to address those youth with specific needs. One in four youth with experience in foster care experience Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, as compared to 4% of all young adults.<sup>4</sup> 84% of 17 and older youth in foster care



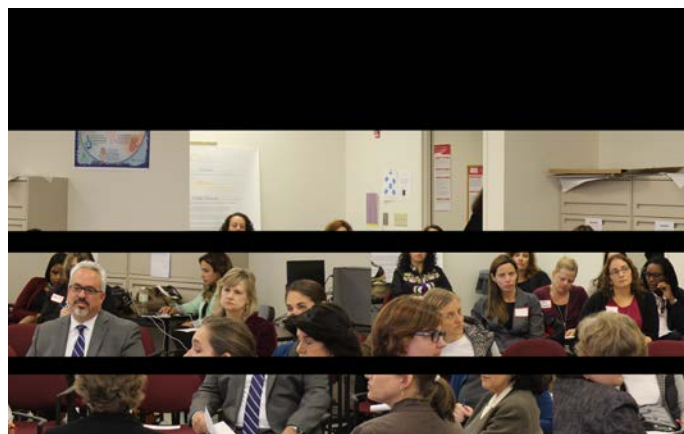
<sup>4</sup> Mark Courtney et. al. “Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth: Outcomes at Ages 23 and 24”, Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.



demonstrate trauma and/or mental health symptoms.<sup>5</sup> Given the trauma so many homeless youth have experienced during their young lives due to abuse or neglect in their homes and/or due to the violence and exploitation of life they have seen living on the streets, it is not surprising that so many homeless youth suffer from mental health issues and engage in substance abuse. Mental health and substance abuse also may themselves contribute to youth becoming homeless. LGBTQ youth experience homelessness at higher rates than non-LGBTQ youth for a range of reasons. A recent study of more than 350 runaway and homeless providers throughout the United States identified four top causes for homelessness among LGBT youth: (1) family rejection resulting from sexual orientation or gender identity; (2) physical, emotional, or sexual abuse; (3) aging out of the foster care system; and (4) financial and emotional neglect. Young women with children are especially at risk of becoming homeless as they face the challenges of juggling employment, child care, and living expenses. Often they lack the education, support, and mentoring they need to overcome the adversities they face. When they become homeless, these families need more than a roof over their head; they need a support system to build upon.

## Key Questions Discussed

- How do youth in the community access mental health and substance abuse services? What works well?
- What service models are successful in promoting housing stability for youth with multiple or complex health needs?
- Thinking about homeless youth and youth in care who present with mental health, and/or substance abuse, how do we balance the need for safe housing but also encourage people to access or accept services without barring them from housing until they accept services?
- What are ways to integrate primary, behavioral health and other health services are needed for this population?
- How do we insure a smooth and successful transition from the child welfare system to the adult human services system when necessary?
- How have programs and staff been retooled and retrained to address the specific needs of youth who are living in permanent supportive housing?
- What are the unique challenges in serving youth who identify as LGBTQI?
- What are the unique challenges that are presented in serving intact families and/or parenting youth with multiple children? Can populations be successfully mixed?



## Housing - Specific Populations Recommendations

- 2.1 Develop opportunities to connect youth with older adults as a support network when familial relationships do not exist.
- 2.2 Development of a comprehensive service delivery system for youth involved in sex trafficking.
- 2.3 Development of training curriculum for staff within DCF and community agencies on securing appropriate healthcare, utilization of Medicaid and decreased reliance on the Emergency Room for primary healthcare.

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<sup>5</sup> Griffin, G; et al. (2011). Addressing the impact of trauma before diagnosing mental health in child welfare. *Child Welfare*. 90(6):69.

2.4 Develop access to shelter beds for youth aging out of the Juvenile Justice Commission/corrections through eligibility expansion and/or new development.

2.5 Expand program models to all areas of the state to ensure that youth do not need to leave their home communities and families to receive services.

2.6 Expand DCF Housing HUB to include access to housing opportunities for independent housing such as home sharing and roommate opportunities that are not subsidized.

### 3. Permanency

Over the past ten years, there have been a number of positive trends in child welfare including overall decreases in the number of reports of child abuse and neglect and reductions in the number of children placed in foster care. However, there are still a significant number of youth for whom public child welfare systems do not achieve the goal of permanence, ensuring they have a legally permanent, nurturing and safe family. Last year, almost 30,000 youth exited foster care without a permanent family but with a plan of independent living or another planned permanent living arrangement (APPLA). This means these youth were not reunified with their original family, nor permanently placed with relatives or other guardians, nor adopted by a new family. Even the most capable young adults are not completely self-sufficient at 18 or even 21, let alone youth with long-term experience in foster care who typically have endured many hardships, had multiple traumatic experiences, and generally have far fewer resources to call upon for support. The outcome of achieving permanency for all children and youth in foster care remains a top priority for federal, state and local child welfare agencies and is a critical component in achieving other key outcomes of safety, well-being and prevention of future homelessness.

*“Too many older foster children and youth leave foster care without family support.”  
-- Charrette Participant*

#### Key Questions Discussed

- How do you identify and pursue additional permanent options for youth i.e., Biological family? Kinship placements? Other caring adults? Adoption?
- How do you respond or address the social, emotional or behavioral problems that undermine permanent connections in families? What services help youth sustain positive relationships?
- What do you think are the most important factors to the success of youth aging out of care into independent living?
- Are there ways that public policies or practices make it easier for families to be permanent options for youth? Could there be more incentives? What policies or practices make it harder? Could these disincentives be changed?
- What is one challenge to permanence you think needs to be addressed first (other than more funding)? What change would you recommend to address that challenge and who should make the change happen?
- What is one public policy you would change in order to increase the number of youth in foster care who achieve permanence?

## Permanency Recommendations

- 3.1 Expand and build upon individuals who value youth and will advocate for the youth's desires, particularly connecting with people from their past.
- 3.2 Enact policy changes that will permit youth to reconnect with relatives who had previously been ruled out and require increased support to reunified families.
- 3.3 Infuse DCP&P resources and supports into biological families, in a manner consistent with resource families, in order to keep families together
- 3.4 Standardize and enhance services to reunified families thereby decreasing re-entry into care. (e.g., Catawba County Child Well-being Project).
- 3.5 Investigate and implement "You Gotta Believe" strategies especially in terms of recruitment, training and support of resource and adoptive families.
- 3.6 Ensure adoptive parents have access to youth's history in placement and other relevant information. Consider opening up adoption records.
- 3.7 Require DCF adoptive caseworkers to follow-up with adoptive families on an annual basis.
- 3.8 Integrate youth in care into orientation, training and programs for potential resource families and other service providers.
- 3.9 Work to increase family connections of youth in crisis. Develop crisis group homes for youth in care vs. placement in a shelter.
- 3.10 Develop training specific to adolescents for resource families.

## 4. Education and Training

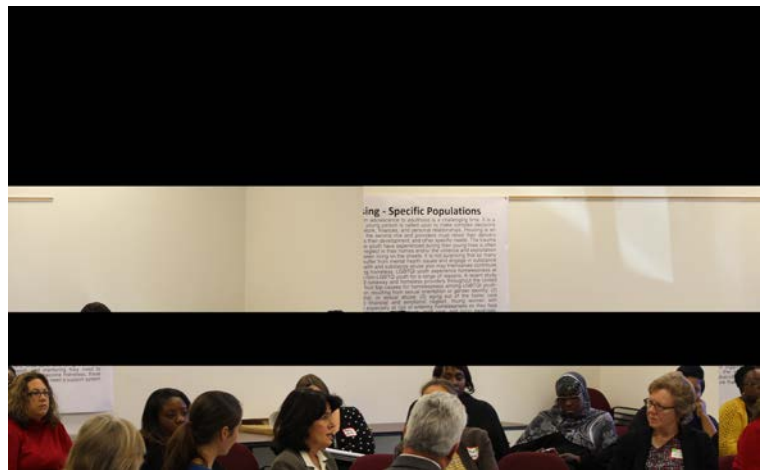
In a recent report by the Economic Analysis and Research Network, where states have the greatest role to play is in making sure that all of their people – and particularly in those from the most disadvantaged backgrounds – have the tools to be highly productive. Education is the key to that. In fact, there is a strong correlation between the educational attainment of a state's workforce and median wages in that state. State child welfare agencies and local educational agencies are obligated to coordinate efforts to ensure the educational achievement of students in foster care (Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008).



According to the Annie E. Casey Foundation Data Book 2014, New Jersey is a leader in early education having the lowest percentage (38%) of 3- and 4-year olds not attending preschool. With a strong and healthy beginning, children can more easily stay on track to remain in school and graduate, pursue postsecondary education and training and successfully transition to adulthood. And while the high school graduation rate in New Jersey is 87.5%, only 77.1% of economically disadvantaged students graduated in 2013. During the most recent record review that focused on the housing, education, and employment status of youth aged 18-21 years who exited an out-of-home placement without achieving permanency and subsequently had their case closed by DCP&P between January 1 and December 31, 2013, one-half of all youth had completed a high school level of education at the time that their DCP&P case was closed. It is a goal for DCF that 95% of youth either be employed or enrolled in an educational/vocational training program at the time of case closure.

## Key Questions Discussed

- What supports are in place after a student enrolls in school/program?
- When does the conversation around education begin with a young person?
- How are resources communicated/advertised within the community?
- How did you shift the mindset and conversation around education from passive to active?
- How do you get “buy in” and sustained commitment from youth?
- How did you change the system/statewide culture?



## Education & Training Recommendations

- 4.1 DCF caseworkers to incorporate academic assessment into their work either directly or through an educational resource worker.
- 4.2 Development of an online resource directory of youth centered programs and services throughout the state. Each local office will have access to a database of services in the community that youth may access.
- 4.3 Develop internship programs for youth in care with the goal of “pathway of work to education, not education to work”.
- 4.4 Create cross agency “sister” peers; Department of Education with Department of Children and Families, Department of Children and Families with Juvenile Justice Commission, Department of Children and Families with Department of Labor.
- 4.5 Schedule ongoing forums between DCF, service providers and school districts for training, coordination and planning.

## Implementation Recommendations

A plan is only as good as its implementation. In addition to the previous recommendations on specific strategies, CSH recommends the following to help ensure a successful implementation of the plan. DCF should:

1. Create an implementation plan that delineates important recommendations that can be put into action even if DCF does not receive federal YARH Implementation funding. DCF currently employs one full-time Project Manager and two part-time youth advocates under this initiative. Plans that are implemented well often are a result of paid full-time position whose main responsibility is to move the plan forward. We recommend DCF consider seeding one position that is fully focused on YARH plan implementation if funding is not awarded. Private foundations that support systemic change would be appropriate places to approach for seed funding resources to support this position.
2. Establish a timeframe for each of the action areas and strategies. Assign timelines and remember that not all of the work will happen immediately. Create a table for each action area and strategy with attainable timelines, with indicators of success, and identify person(s) responsible. This plan should be reviewed and implemented concurrently with DCF's current 2014-2016 Strategic Plan. It should be noted that several recommendations included work that is currently underway at DCF, which indicates an alignment with community-wide priorities. In these cases, DCF should consider communicating these projects more broadly.
3. Use existing committees to advance this work, rather than creating new committees. There will be meetings to work out the details of implementing the plan, if there are existing committees doing work, attach those committees to the plan rather than creating parallel processes. For example, the YARH Steering Committee could become the group that manages the overall implementation; current youth advisory boards or other youth groups could develop portions of the training for resource families. Also, once a committee has done its work, do not be averse to ending that committee.
4. Use the implementation plan to inform county-based efforts to end youth homelessness. Each of New Jersey's twenty-one (21) counties has created or is in the process of creating their local Plans to End Homelessness, a subsection of which specifically addresses youth homelessness. Local communities have clearly identified the need for the local plans to be consistent with the eventual state plan therefore guidance from the state as to the priorities for this population will facilitate more robust and fruitful planning.



## Appendix A

### Charrette Steering Committee

Catherine Brewster  
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CSH

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Homeless Youth & Special Initiatives Coordinator  
NJ Department of Children and Families

Alison Recca-Ryan  
CSH

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Center for the Study of Social Policy

## Appendix B

### Charrette Experts

#### Housing Options

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Tabitha James, Youth Advocate  
Meghan Leigh, Covenant House  
Charles Lewis, Esq., Conifer Realty  
Maria Maio, US Department of Housing and Urban Development  
Mary Rossetini, Advance Housing  
Misael Toledo, Youth Advocate  
Colleen Velez, CSH

#### Housing Specific Populations

Carmine Deo, Community Hope  
Colleen Jackson, West End Residences  
Meghan Leigh, Covenant House  
Janel Winter, NJ Department of Human Services  
Peg Wright, Great Expectations  
Yirgu Wolde, NJ Housing & Mortgage Finance Agency

#### Permanency

Karen Burns, CASA Search and Connect  
Susan Grundberg, You Gotta Believe  
Christina Triplett, Catawba County Child Wellbeing Project

#### Education and Training

Rashid Adam, Job Corps  
Allston Carrol, Seton Hall University  
Aaron Ford, Youth Advocate  
Aramis Gutierrez, Rutgers Scholars Program  
Dan Rhoton, HopeWorks  
Melissa Stager, Office of Career and Technical Education



## Appendix C

### Charrette Participants

First Name	Last Name	Agency
Valori	Abad	Rutgers-Child Health Unit
		New Jersey Association of Mental Health and Addiction
Mary	Abrams	Agencies Inc.
June	Albanowski	Anchor House Inc.
Megann	Anderson	NJACYF
Caridad	Argote-Freyre	Law Guardian
Diane	Baird	People First!
Millicent	Barry	Foster & Adoptive Family Services
Laurie	Becker	Morris County HS
Jacqueline	Bell-Bowe	Child Health Program
Nicole	Broadnax	Essex Count Dept. Of Citizen Services
Veronica	Buccellato	Rutgers/DCP&P
Jasmine	Carlisle	Covenant House
Robert	Cerchio	Hudson county One Stop
		Gloucester County Department of Human Services/Southern NJ
Lisa	Cerny	CoC
Florio	Christine	Sussex County Department of Human Services
Sandra	Cintron	Camden City School District
Jamie	Ciofalo	Lodi BoE
Mary	Coogan	Advocates for Children of New Jersey
Madline	Cook	Edison Housing Authority
Kimberly	Cowart	Somerset County, NJ
Natasha	Cranmer	DCPP
Mereides	Delgado	Anchor House
Louis	DeLucia	Garden State Home
Lesley	Dixon	Rutgers University
Lue-Hing	Erin	New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency
Jennifer	Flores	Children's Aid and Family Services
Tourae	Freeman	Division of Child Protection and Permanency
Barbara	Gellura	NJ Department of Labor & Workforce Development
Nancy	Gillespie	Cumberland County Human Services
Rita	Gulden	CASA of NJ
Amy	Hayes	Chester child study team
She-Lia	Henry	Tri-City Peoples Corporation
Juanita	Henry	Crossroads Programs Inc
Eileen	Higgins	Monmouth County Division of Workforce Development
Rolidel	Hormazabal	Covenant House
Lori	Jalkiewicz	Robins' Nest, Inc.
Briggs	Jenni	Roots & Wings
Robyn	Joannou	Catholic Charities -- Beacon House
Bridget	Kennedy	Middlesex County Office of Human Services
Erin	Klein	Robins' Nest Inc.
Jeanette	Krone	Chester Public School district
Vernon	Lawrence	Pleasantville HA/PV CDC
Meghan	Leigh	Covenant House

Dawn	Lenz	IEP Youth Services, Inc.
Ashiri	Lopez	NJCDC
Jeanne	Lovett	CHP/DCPP
Erin	Lue-Hing	New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency
Bernadette	Mahoney	Crossroads Programs, Inc
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Beth	Mattoon	Public Defender-Office of the Law Guardian
Natasha	Mayes	Essex County Dept of Citizen Services-Community Action
Sandra	McDonnell	DCPP
Delia	Menendez	Union City Board of Education
Valerie	Mielke	Division of Mental Health & Addiction Services
Patricia	Miles-Jackson	Chance For A Real Change
Keith	Miller	DCPP
Patty	Mojta	Prevent Child Abuse NJ
Alexa	Morales	Community Treatment Solutions
Lori	Morris	CASA for Children of Mercer and Burlington Counties
Jonique	Mosley	Hudson County Department of Health and Human Services
Konniesha	Moulton	Family Connections
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## Appendix D

### Full List of Recommendations

#### Housing Options

##### Unit Creation

1. Identify developers who build affordable housing and do targeted outreach to increase partnerships with the goal of creating homeless set asides.
2. Advocate with NJ Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency to expand the point system for the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program through comment coordination with those serving youth on the annual Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP).
3. Identify developers who build affordable housing and undertake targeted outreach to those developers to increase partnerships with the goal of creating youth set asides within larger affordable housing projects.
4. Enhance services and prioritize development of additional units of housing for parenting youth.
5. Identify the number of emergency beds needed throughout the state and develop policies and practices to ensure immediate access to these beds.

##### Unit Affordability

1. Create a pool of funds that could be utilized for rental deposits, utilities or move in costs to be used only on an as-needed basis; this fund should also utilize non-traditional funding sources, such as the faith-based community.
2. DCF to pattern a rental assistance program after the NJ Department of Human Services/Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services rental subsidy program which would allow for long-term rental assistance.

##### System Changes

1. Develop and enact policies that ensure the smooth transition of youth to the adult human service system, when necessary, in a coordinated and timely manner.
2. NJ state funding agencies to develop a coordinated RFP for capital, operating and services that will ultimately synchronize timing with federal funding opportunities.
3. Identify the number of emergency beds needed throughout the state and develop policies and practices to ensure immediate access to these beds.

## Coordination with Local Communities

1. Identify, develop and publicize homeless entry access points for at risk youth -that are consistent across the state.
2. Engage NJ Mayors in the HUD Initiative, My Brother's Keeper, to convene community groups to ensure that minority youth receive all necessary services.
3. Create common definitions of homelessness that are agreed upon by state and county offices.

## Within DCF

1. Create common definitions and standards for program models, including Permanent Supportive Housing, permanent housing, transitional housing, and emergency shelter.
2. Creation of specialized "transition aged youth" caseworkers in local district offices, who work extended hours and who are experts in services, programs, and opportunities available and or needed to ensure housing stability for youth.
3. Enhance the Adolescent Housing Hub to become a conduit to direct youth toward housing and services. Publicize centralized phone number.
4. Development of web based youth resource directory that youth can access 24/7.
5. Develop standards of care for follow-up services for youth who transition out of DCF funded programs coupled with the necessary funding for provider agencies when needed.
6. Enhance services and prioritize development of additional units of housing for parenting youth.

## Education and Training

1. Develop comprehensive training for first educators on how to identify youth experiencing homelessness. Invite formerly homeless youth to help conduct the training.
2. Stable housing is correlated with educational achievement - expand opportunities for remedial coursework for underachieving students.

## Housing- Specific Populations

### Within DCF

1. Creation of specialized “transition aged youth” caseworkers in local district offices, who work extended hours and who are experts in services, programs, and opportunities available and/or needed to ensure housing stability for youth.
2. Greater emphasis to be placed on job training versus college prep. Develop stronger working relationships with DVR and DOL to open additional avenues of training, allowing for opportunities to explore multiple careers.
3. Develop opportunities to connect youth with older adults as a support network when familial relationships do not exist.
4. Consider policy revision to provide additional transition time for youth up to age 25.
5. Development of a comprehensive service delivery system for youth involved in sex trafficking.
6. Development of training curriculum for staff within DCF and community agencies on securing appropriate health care, utilization of Medicaid and decrease reliance on Emergency Room as primary care source.

### Work with other Partners and Systems

1. Develop access to shelter beds for youth aging out of JJC/corrections through eligibility expansion and/or new development.
2. Expand program models to all areas of the state so ensure that youth do not need to leave their home communities and families to receive services.
3. DCF Housing Hub to be expanded to include access to housing opportunities for independent housing such as home sharing and roommate opportunities that are not subsidized.
4. Gather data on intergenerational housing throughout the US to determine potential replication in NJ.

## Permanency

### Reunification

1. Expand and build upon individuals who value youth and will advocate for the youth's desires, particularly connecting with people from their past.
2. Make policy changes that would permit youth to reconnect with relatives who had previously been ruled out and require increased support to reunified families.
3. Investigate extending 12-15 month term, currently in place through federal Adoption & Safe Families Act (ASFA) to increase opportunities for family reunification.
4. Provide financial incentives & other incentives for kinship legal guardianship & adoption that are inline or better than independent living.
5. Develop statute that does not permit youth to leave care without a caring adult being in place.
6. Revisit Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) policies and the possibility of a youth returning home in some cases.
7. End use of Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA) option.
8. Put DCP&P resources and supports into biological families in a manner consistent with resource families in an attempt to keep families together.
9. Provide incentives for adolescent workers to find permanent families, rather than incentives to close cases.
10. Standardize and enhance services to reunified families thereby decreasing reentry into care.

### Adoption

1. Facilitate a discussion of opening up adoption records - NJ is a closed state - to foster relationships with family and siblings.
2. Investigate study on You Gotta Believe especially in terms of recruitment strategies.
3. Provide financial & other incentives for kinship legal guardianship & adoption that are inline or better than independent living.
4. Ensure adoptive parents have access to youth's history in placement and other information.
5. DCF Adoptive Caseworkers to follow up with adoptive families on an annual basis.

6. Decrease adoptive parents returning adolescents to DCF by retaining adoptive case worker as a resource to parents.

### While Youth are in Care

1. Integrate youth in care into orientation program for potential resource families and other service providers.
2. Work to increase family connections of youth in crisis. Develop crisis group homes for youth in care versus placement in a shelter.
3. Develop training for resource families specifically on adolescents.
4. Expand and build upon individuals who value youth and will advocate for the youth's desires, particularly connecting with people from their past.
5. Lower and cap caseload for adolescent workers -- 10 cases -- to allow for increased workload and travel.
6. Develop mechanisms to speed up referral sources and increase pool of resource homes so that first placement is the BEST placement.
7. Ensure youth have a consistent case manager in place for a minimum of 5 years.
8. Create "virtual" Independent Living Programs, where youth live totally independently but still have access to services when needed.

### Work with Other Partners and Systems

1. Incorporate the Teach for America model into DCF.
2. Develop seamless systems of communication to allow for tracking of students and communication with schools.
3. Integrate youth in care into orientation program for potential resource families and other service providers.
4. Revise policies to address housing and services for all youth who "age out" -- not just DCP&P youth -- thereby decreasing incidences of entering the homeless system for LGBTQ youth, youth from families with a disabled head of household and/or impoverished families.



## Education and Training

### Within DCF

1. DCF caseworkers to incorporate academic assessment into their work either directly or through an educational resource worker.
2. Require a designated worker to oversee educational needs of youth similar to current nursing oversight.
3. Development of an online resource directory of youth centered programs and services throughout the state. Each local district office to have access to database of services in the community that youth may access.
4. Develop internship programs for youth in care with the goal of “pathway of work to education” not “education to work”.
5. Contract out for education experts in local offices, similar to substance abuse, mental health and domestic violence experts currently under contract (IMPORTANT).

### Work with Other Partners and Systems

1. Create cross agency “sister” peers; DOE with DCF, DCF with JJC; DCF with DOL.
2. Schedule ongoing forums between DCF, service providers and school districts for training, coordination and planning.
3. Expand NJ Scholars Program to include a loan component for private colleges and graduate school.

### Outside of DCF

1. Currently CASA serves 20% of youth in out of home placement. Expand CASA services to all youth in placement to serve as an education advocate.
2. Schools at the secondary level should be encouraged to schedule parent teacher conferences (for youth in care).