

SOUTHERN NEVADA PLAN TO END YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

With the third-highest prevalence of youth homelessness in the nation, Southern Nevada is experiencing a startling crisis that demands immediate action. The Southern Nevada Homeless Continuum of Care (SNH CoC), a group of local stakeholders committed to addressing homelessness in the community, counted 2,096 unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness — nearly a third of the entire homeless population in the area — in its annual Point-in-Time (PIT) count in 2017. Even more alarming is that 93 percent of these youth are sleeping either outside or in places not meant for human habitation, like their car or an abandoned building.

Federal leaders and communities across the country now recognize that youth experiencing homelessness require a response that accounts for their specific situations and stage of life. Without such tailored interventions, youth will remain in the homeless system without the necessary supports to exit, and will become our future population of adults experiencing chronic homelessness.

Thanks to the creative collaboration of a diverse group of funders, national experts, community stakeholders, and youth and young adults who have themselves experienced homelessness, the Southern Nevada Plan to End Youth Homelessness is in our hands. This Plan will serve as a roadmap for the many partners working together to prevent and end youth homelessness in Southern Nevada.

CREATING THE PLAN

This Plan is the result of a collaborative community effort by individuals and organizations, led by the Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth (NPHY); Las Vegas Sands; Clark County Social Service, the SNH CoC collaborative applicant; the SNH CoC Planning Working Group, represented by the City of Las Vegas; the University of Nevada, Las Vegas Greenspun College of Urban Affairs; and Young Adults in Charge (YAC), Southern Nevada’s Youth Action Board.

In November 2017, our community came together for the first annual Southern Nevada Youth Homelessness Summit, presented by NPHY and Las Vegas Sands. This community-wide event served as a kickoff to the Movement to End Youth Homelessness in Southern Nevada (the Movement), an initiative to build a focused and sustained effort to end youth homelessness in the region. The Movement was tasked with producing the first-ever Southern Nevada Plan to End Youth Homelessness.

The Movement’s decision-making structure was based on four core teams working in coordination. **Young Adults in Charge** was established to ensure that voices of youth led the drafting of the Plan from the very beginning. This group began by meeting monthly, and then elected to meet weekly as its membership grew. YAC representatives also participated in meetings of the **Joint Decision-Making Team** (JDMT), which was comprised of Movement leaders, including Plan funders, and was tasked with reviewing all Plan components and making final determinations about what content to include. The **Planning Team**, made up of key community stakeholders and youth-serving providers, acted as the driver of the Plan throughout much of the process, synthesizing and packaging all information and recommendations for JDMT to consider. Finally, an expanded version of the **SNH CoC Youth Working Group** (YWG+) was made up of members of the SNH CoC’s existing Youth Working Group and newly invited subject matter experts. This group provided community input throughout the process, along with others who were brought in to address specific topics.

To keep up with progress on the Plan, visit the Movement at www.nphy.org/themovement.

OUR VISION FOR SUCCESS

We will know the Plan has succeeded when our community’s coordinated response system can ensure that homelessness among unaccompanied youth is rare, brief, one-time, and equitably addressed.

These criteria are modeled on federal standards that define homelessness among youth as **rare** when homelessness does not occur often, and when youth and young adults do not exit our public systems into unstable housing conditions. Homelessness among youth is **brief** when, if a young person does experience homelessness, their experience in the homeless services system lasts only a short time. Homelessness among youth is **one-time** when after exiting the homeless services system into housing, youth remain stably housed and do not return to homelessness. Homelessness among youth is **equitably addressed** when all youth experiencing homelessness, regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or gender identity, gain equitable access to our system and its services and have equitable exits to safe and stable housing.

Six principles, described in detail in the Plan, will guide our efforts as we make the changes necessary to meet these standards. Our system to end youth homelessness will...

- ... **be person-centered.**
- ... **be accessible and equitable.**
- ... **provide comprehensive wraparound housing and support.**
- ... **promote accountability.**
- ... **be as efficient as possible.**
- ... **be collaboration-focused.**

GOALS

As the convener of federal bodies addressing the issue of homelessness, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) has published criteria and benchmarks on ending youth homelessness. After discussion, the decision-making groups in the Movement decided that USICH criteria would form the best framework for the goals of our own Plan, and would help propel our community towards the vision of making youth homelessness rare, brief, one-time, and equitably addressed.

Our goals outline in broad terms what the community hopes to achieve. In the Plan, each of these goals is defined by specific objectives and supported by metrics that will keep us accountable to our vision and make our work transparent to all stakeholders.

- 1 The community identifies all unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness.
- 2 The community uses prevention and diversion strategies whenever possible, and otherwise provides immediate access to low-barrier crisis housing and services to any youth who needs and wants it.
- 3 The community uses coordinated entry processes to effectively link all youth experiencing homelessness to housing and services that are tailored to their needs.
- 4 The community acts with urgency to swiftly assist youth to move into permanent or non-time-limited housing options with appropriate services and supports.
- 5 The community has resources, plans, and system capacity in place to continue to prevent and quickly end future experiences of homelessness among youth.

STRATEGY FOCUS AREAS

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to preventing and ending youth homelessness, and our goals will not be achieved if we focus all of our efforts in one area alone. Instead, a variety of strategies have been identified that each align with one or more of the following focus areas: Legislative/Policy, Fundraising, Public-Private Partnerships, Housing & Services, and Systems Intersectionality. The strategies will serve as active steps toward achieving each of the five goals of the Plan. Aligning each strategy with one or more of these focus areas will help diverse partners and stakeholders to institutionalize and amplify our successful innovations.

NEXT STEPS

Now the hard work of implementation begins. To succeed, we need the voices and energy of policymakers, service providers, businesses, and community stakeholders. Much like the heavily collaborative planning process, implementation must also be carried out with an all-hands-on-deck approach. Southern Nevada is rich with subject matter experts and systems leaders whose participation will be essential as we move forward. Youth and young adults with lived experience of homelessness will continue to play a central role. Together, we will use the Plan to transform our existing systems and create a sustainable end to youth homelessness in Southern Nevada.

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Even though you usually only see adults over the age of 25 sitting outside asking people for money or help so they can get food, **most people don't even know that there are kids** that's sleeping outside on park benches and having to beg for their next meal because they don't have money to go and buy food. I believe that maybe if we got **more people to speak up** or maybe get these homeless youth centers on the news or something, people would be **aware of what's happening in their city.**

— NJ, Age 19, Las Vegas

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bethemovement
to end youth homelessness in Southern Nevada