



i NEW OPPORTUNITIES



NEW OPPORTUNITIES PREVENTION STRATEGY

A National Strategy to Prevent Youth Homelessness

JANUARY 2024

 **CHAPIN HALL**
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO



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This document would not be possible without the substantial energies of a group of young people who partnered with us across months to bring their perspectives, seed new questions, and generate novel ideas. These individuals brought forward the missed opportunities that characterize the pathways to homelessness, including economic and housing insecurity; discrimination; loss; family challenges; disparities in education, health, and justice (and more) – to generate now opportunities for prevention and early intervention. We hope that this strategy and the work that flows from it honors your contributions.

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Disclaimer

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A National Strategy to Prevent Youth Homelessness

We cannot end youth homelessness until we prevent it.

Youth homelessness is a major public health concern. In a recent year, over 4 million young Americans ages 13–25 experienced some form of homelessness.¹ Homelessness is a traumatic experience preceded by adversity. It has numerous consequences, including physical and mental health problems,² substance use,³ interpersonal violence,^{4,5} sexual and labor exploitation,^{6,7} early pregnancy,⁸ suicidality,⁹ and early death.^{10,11} Youth homelessness (YH) is a major pathway into older adult homelessness,^{12,13} which itself is associated with poor health outcomes and early death.¹⁴

The number of young people who become homeless each year is about half the total number experiencing homelessness.¹⁵ Even if the nation undertook remarkable efforts to ensure that every young person who becomes homeless in a year is safely housed, half as many would be homeless the following year. Until we can prevent young people from becoming homeless in the first place, the problem will endure.

YH occurs during a life phase in which young people should be committing their energies to educational, vocational, and social aspirations rather than making stark choices about housing and food. As a nation, we tend to see homelessness as an individual problem rather than a systemic one, but risk for homelessness is not equal. Longstanding structural inequities and discriminatory policies predispose young people who identify as Black and Latinx, American Indian and Alaskan Native, and LGBTQI+.¹⁶ Also at higher risk are young people who: have past child welfare involvement, have experienced the death of a parent, are young parents, don't have a high school degree, and have contact with criminal legal systems.¹⁷

Homelessness is intergenerational: about a quarter of young people experiencing homelessness had their first episodes as children. Many young people come from families where housing instability is the norm. Others who experience homelessness have endured losses, longstanding family conflict, and substance use in the household.

Ahead of homelessness, virtually all young people interact with family, educators, community members, health providers, social services, and others with the means to assist them. Yet, we are missing the warning signs. If we turn these missed opportunities into new opportunities, we can interrupt pathways into youth homelessness and prevent a new generation of young people from experiencing it.

New opportunities require new ways of thinking and doing. To date, our national response to youth homelessness has been largely reactive—that is, expenditures mostly fund crisis approaches such as shelters, street outreach, and temporary housing. This is like using the emergency room as the health care system. Crisis responses are humane and necessary; however, the evidence we have today casts doubt on their capacity to create sustainable change in youth stability and well-being.¹⁸

We can turn missed opportunities into new opportunities for young people.

THE NEW OPPORTUNITIES INITIATIVE

The pathway to homelessness is beset with missed opportunities. In 2022, with a desire to identify new prevention opportunities, a group of nearly 100 lived experts, educators, child welfare experts, providers, McKinney-Vento liaisons, researchers, policymakers, public agency leads, community leaders, and others convened in Washington, DC. Before that, we spent months studying the challenge, working with experts, and recruiting and partnering with young adult advisors.

We made four commitments: New Opportunities is youth powered, equity centered, evidence informed, and cross systems. We talked about what's working, what's not working, and lifted up new and emerging community practices. We sought to work from an aligned understanding of federal, state, and local policy and intervention.



With a timely understanding of the pathways to homelessness, and an abiding commitment to changing them, we formed working groups that collaborated to create an initial national prevention strategy. The working groups included young people with lived expertise whose contributions enabled new insights. What follows is our best effort to identify the greatest drivers of homelessness and develop corresponding policy, practice, and research strategies to address them.

We offer a set of guiding principles and a prevention framework that differentiates four levels of prevention based on risk. Then, we identify the missed opportunities that drive the highest numbers of young people toward housing instability and homelessness. These opportunities represent our greatest chances to change course and forge new pathways to resilience.

ALL IN: The Federal Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness

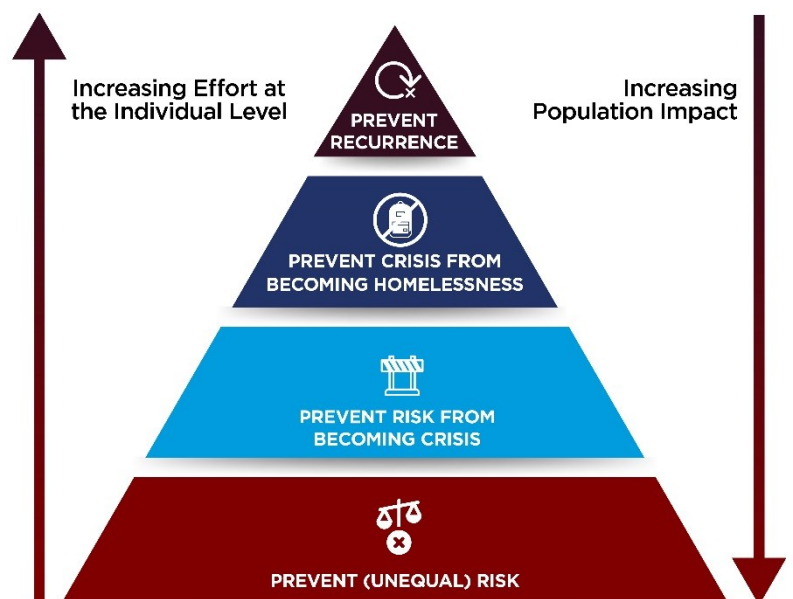
Late in 2022, the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness released [All In: The Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness](#). Declaring that homelessness has no place in America, the authors of All In indicate a commitment to reduce homelessness 25% by 2025. The plan includes three foundational pillars—equity, data, and collaboration—and three solution pillars—housing and supports, response, and prevention. *All In* recognizes that the dynamics of homelessness are different among young people. The strategic plan proposes seven prevention strategies to reduce risk of housing instability and homelessness for individuals mostly likely to experience them. The New Opportunities strategy takes a similar approach.

All In's priority groups include households most at risk where increased availability of and access to meaningful and sustainable employment, education, and supportive services may help avert homelessness. *All In* stresses the need to reduce housing instability for individuals with past involvement with public systems (such as child welfare and justice) and for survivors of human trafficking, sexual assault, stalking, and interpersonal violence. It is common for young people experiencing homelessness to have had such experiences; in fact, these experiences may have triggered their homelessness. *All In's* prevention platform recognizes that we cannot end youth homelessness until we prevent it. The strategy includes new ways to reduce housing instability among youth and young adults. We agree wholeheartedly with this strategy.

GETTING TO PREVENTION: The Public Health Impact Pyramid

Prevention approaches worldwide promote the health and well-being of individuals, families, communities, and populations. Public health efforts prevent and reduce the appearance and impact of illness, disability, and social problems by identifying risk factors that increase the likelihood of their appearance and identifying the sources of resilience that buffer them. Achieving the greatest population impact requires shifting the lens from individuals and “downstream” interventions to the broad social conditions, inequities, and missed opportunities that elevate risk. Social determinants (or drivers) of health (SDOH) represent “upstream” causes of disparities in health and well-being outcomes. Safe, stable housing alone is associated with significant health benefits across the life course.⁴⁹ These drivers are well established in research, including the impact of deprivation in food, clothing, and shelter and aggravating effects of limited access to quality health care and education.

Figure 1. Youth Homelessness Prevention Pyramid



Investments in public health prevention reduce problems from smoking and cancer to motor vehicle fatalities. Prevention works and reduces costs in systems from health^{20,21} and mental health²² to housing.²³ Success comes from public awareness, screening, early intervention, and prompt, effective treatments that are accessible and affordable to all and result in sustained, measurable change. In 20 years, the total number of youth in the justice system has declined, however, Black, Latino, and Native American youth now make up a larger share of incarcerated persons.²⁴ This underscores a need to examine patterns of risk and resilience and ensure that we acknowledge and address root causes and SDOH across our efforts.

Practically speaking, hundreds of evidence-supported prevention programs can reduce the incidence, effects, and costs of homelessness and related problems, saving and extending lives. Yet, numerous barriers stand in the way of public investment. First, prevention typically requires longitudinal, multisectoral investments that are challenging due to the relatively short-term nature of spending decisions in our policymaking structures. Second, investments in one system (e.g., health, housing, or education) may reap time-lagged benefits across systems (such as improved outcomes and return on investment cannot be attributed to a singular individual or act). Sometimes called the wrong pocket problem,²⁵ investments made by one entity affect another: Resources come from one pocket and go into another. Funding siloes can impede investment in prevention, especially when payoffs aren't yet established by evidence and may be a long way off. Still, we know that prevention programs from health to Head Start produce significant, long-term gains in human capital, even across generations.

Each person's pathway to homelessness is unique, yet there are common drivers that set the stage. Tackling YH means knowing and addressing drivers of disparity. Applying what we know can change pathways from longstanding social and structural inequities to missed opportunities along the path from risk to crisis, and crisis to homelessness.

New Opportunities operates from an adapted public health impact pyramid with four levels of prevention²⁶:



1. **Prevent (unequal) risk:** Address structural conditions that create unequal risk, including longstanding policies and practices that place subgroups at distinct and cumulative disadvantage.



2. **Prevent risk from becoming crisis:** Screen, identify, and intervene upstream to interrupt common pathways from becoming crisis, for example, family conflict.



3. **Prevent crisis from becoming homelessness:** Avert homelessness through accessible, affirming supports at times of urgency and crisis. For example, supporting a young person who discloses they are gay or lesbian within a nonaccepting household or a young person dealing with unbearable family conflict.



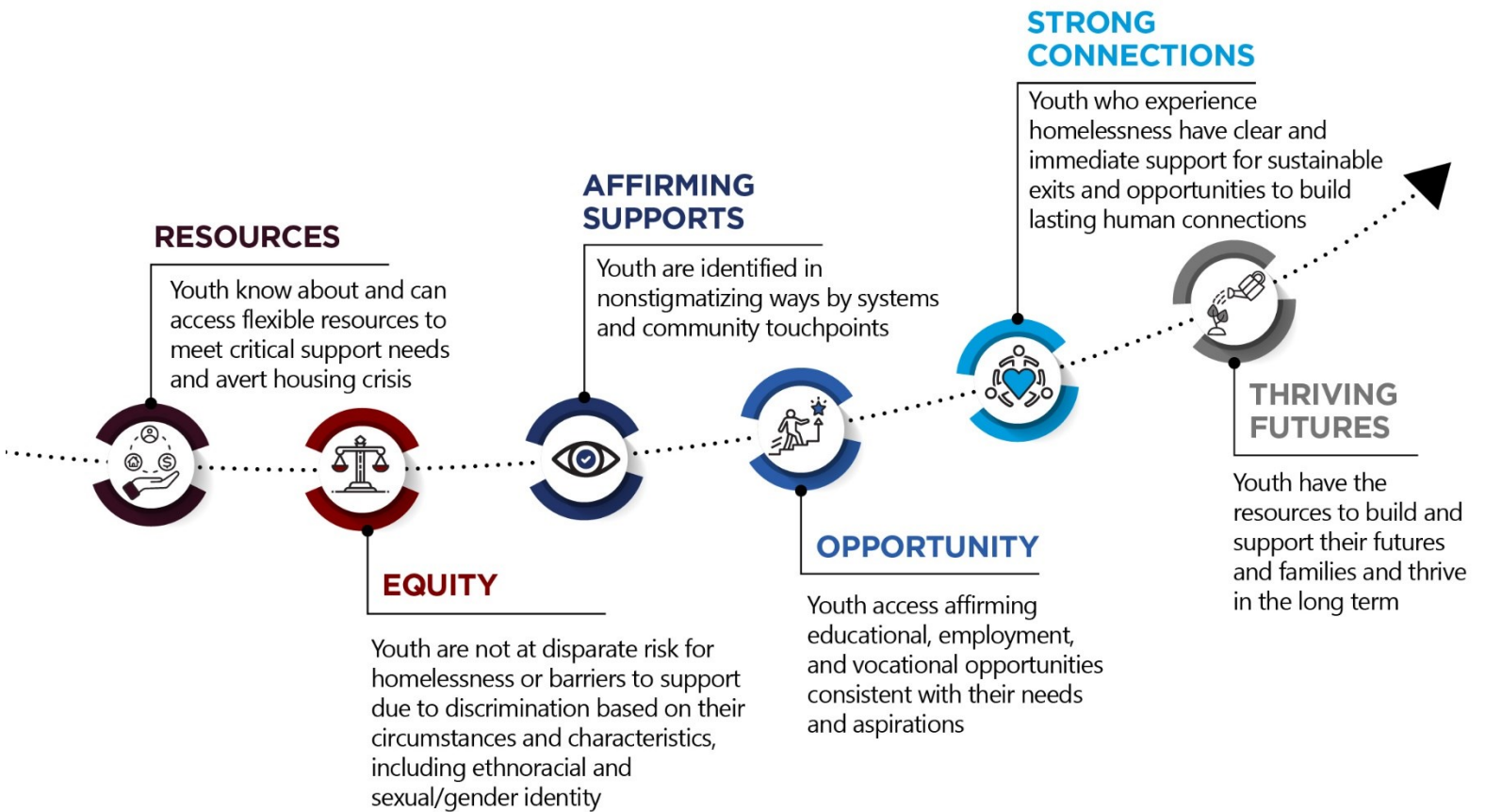
4. **Prevent recurrence:** If homelessness is unavoidable, ensure prompt, affirming supports, brief duration, and sustainable exits with ongoing support for well-being.

In the pages that follow, we elaborate on these four levels of YH prevention. For each level, we discuss prevention strategies—policy, practice, and research initiatives—that align with the level and have the potential to achieve each form of prevention. We emphasize the drivers that are responsible (as far as we know today) for the greatest inflow into homelessness. The impact pyramid recognizes that the greatest effect on long-term well-being comes from acknowledging and addressing underlying structural conditions that disproportionately affect particular groups in the population (level 1). Higher levels increasingly represent “downstream” interventions and more individualized responses.

NEW OPPORTUNITIES STRATEGY TO PREVENT YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

In the next sections, we present a strategy aligned to four levels of prevention and predicated on our understanding of the pathways into and through youth homelessness. Each New Opportunities working group operated from that understanding, informed by evidence and lived experience, addressing one level of prevention. These diverse groups identified the most common missed opportunities and then articulated policy, practice, and research strategies with potential to turn missed opportunities into new opportunity. In addition to the four core New Opportunities commitments, the working group members developed guiding principles (below) and collaborated to propose changes with potential to reduce unequal risk, prevent risk from turning into crisis, and prevent crisis from becoming homelessness. This strategy is a mere starting point. It needs to be disseminated, implemented, and monitored, in close partnership with stakeholders whose partnership will support its success and evolution. Each of the four levels notes missed opportunities along with policy, research, and practice strategies that can create new opportunities for young adults (YAs) and move down the path of prevention.

Figure 2. New Opportunities Guiding Principles





PREVENTION LEVEL 1: PREVENT (UNEQUAL) RISK

Risk for housing instability and homelessness emerges from inadequate housing stock and a lack of affordable housing, often combined with lower wage jobs. Risk is higher in communities that have experienced longstanding structural inequities, including racial segregation, redlining, discrimination, inadequate tenant protections, housing covenants, diminished investment in community (parks, trees), colocation of polluting industries with deleterious health effects, and more.

Prevent unequal risk through housing availability

MISSED OPPORTUNITY	Sufficient stock of affordable housing
EXAMPLES	YAs experiencing homelessness come from low-income families who experience disproportionate poverty, systems involvement, and a lack of safe, stable housing.
CONTEXT	Housing cost explains a good portion of homelessness prevalence. A nationwide shortage of affordable housing drives housing instability/homelessness, with disproportionate effects on Black, Latinx, Native American, and other minority groups, creating enormous
NEW OPPORTUNITY	Invest in housing supply, new regulatory flexibilities, and funding streams that encourage affordable housing.

Prevent unequal risk through direct cash transfers.

MISSED OPPORTUNITY	Developing human capital and addressing intergenerational poverty among young people
EXAMPLES	YAs from economically and socially distressed households experience few realistic housing and education options in the transition to adulthood.
CONTEXT	Intergenerational wealth is significantly higher in White versus non-White families. U.S. parents collectively give young adult (YA) children \$500B/year. YAs at risk for homelessness come from homes with instability, limited labor market participation, and insufficient capital to weather crisis, let alone provide cash.
NEW OPPORTUNITY	Direct cash transfers to YAs at risk for housing instability to advance agency and stability; other housing interventions including Family Unification Program and Housing Choice vouchers.

Prevent unequal risk by increasing access to quality resources and supports

MISSED OPPORTUNITY	Disparities in housing, education, health, other systems
EXAMPLES	Risk is cumulative and intersecting. Few community resources exist in neighborhoods with multiple stressors and there is little incentive for providers to operate.
CONTEXT	Individuals in impoverished communities experience poor housing quality, more community violence, and limited access to high-quality education and health care. This is the legacy of policy-driven segregation, redlining, and other forms of discrimination related to race. It extends to sexual and gender identity.
NEW OPPORTUNITY	Preventing unequal risk requires structural interventions to reduce disproportionality.





PREVENTION LEVEL 1: PREVENT (UNEQUAL) RISK

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

	POLICY	PRACTICE	RESEARCH
HOUSING AVAILABILITY	<p>Federal, state, and local investment in housing supply, including shoring up the Low Income Housing Tax Credit and incentivizing development beyond poor areas with high racial concentration.</p> <p>Local policies that account for inequitable housing access, include transit-oriented development, and consider needs of TAY, e.g., tax incentives and high density zoning.</p>	<p>Include in the service array housing navigators and ambassadors to assist YAs in attaining affordable housing and support transitions to stability.</p> <p>Financial counseling for individuals and families, including credit, income-to-credit, and housing program eligibility.</p> <p>Enable YAs to consider housing options in high-opportunity communities, e.g., with cash transfers; social bonds.</p>	<p>Ensure data systems capture relevant information and can be easily merged to inform efforts.</p> <p>Continue/expand research efforts that evaluate housing development regulations and incentives.</p> <p>Research on the relation between housing options and YA outcomes.</p> <p>Leverage data-driven know-how of market forces and effects on local housing stock.</p>
DIRECT CASH TRANSFERS	<p>While working toward equity at scale, deploy cash transfers to level the playing field. Other subsidies can work and are under-resourced.</p> <p>Waivers to encourage direct cash transfers (DCTs) without benefits cliffs affecting student aid, TANF, SNAP, health care, etc.</p> <p>Given the role of higher education in lifelong income, provide more financial support to individuals and families.</p>	<p>Help education, health, mental health, and other providers discern poverty and domestic conflict, detect housing instability, and intervene.</p> <p>Support YAs to establish credit; ensure clear guidance, help procuring and managing student loans, etc.</p> <p>Community development, planning, and capacity building to support TAY, developed in partnership with lived experts.</p>	<p>Evaluate the effectiveness of DCTs and “cash plus” programs on housing and well-being.</p> <p>Long-term studies on youth pathways into and through homelessness.</p> <p>Studies on economic and human capital effects of poverty interventions.</p>
QUALITY RESOURCES & SUPPORTS	<p>Expand Medicaid coverage and ensure access to full service array, including housing, navigation, crisis, and in-person and virtual support.</p> <p>Enforce/expand tenant protections to prohibit discrimination by income source (e.g., subsidies, vouchers) and continue pandemic-initiated flexibilities.</p> <p>Ensure that policy addresses barriers to access (for example, transportation, disability, linguistic barriers, cost, and citizenship requirements).</p>	<p>Ensure gender- and culturally responsive, trauma-smart services in law enforcement, courts, schools, healthcare, and human services.</p> <p>Support professional preparation and continuing education programs to prepare a diverse workforce capable of affirming engagement.</p> <p>Low barrier access to an affirming array of health care, education, and related supports and frequent information points regarding access.</p>	<p>Research on personnel prep and practice for “what works” in youth- and equity-centered services.</p> <p>Develop and validate universal, cross-systems education, support, and screening efforts.</p> <p>Study the effectiveness of cross-systems screening, anti-bias efforts, and professional training.</p>



PREVENTION LEVEL 2: PREVENT RISK FROM BEING CRISIS

We are improving our understanding of risk factors and conditions associated with future youth homelessness, such as ethno-racial and LGBTQ+ identity, family conflict, loss of parent/caregiver, household economic hardship, education and mental health difficulties, chronic school absenteeism, and involvement in public systems (e.g., juvenile justice, foster care, behavioral health). Yet, how do we reduce risk, prevent it from becoming a crisis, and better leverage and build YA assets in the process?

Prevent Risk from Becoming Crisis through Systems Collaboration

MISSED OPPORTUNITY Systems contacts and transitions too often leave young people at risk for homelessness

EXAMPLES Systems that engage youth and YAs and their families are uniquely poised to identify precursors, assets and needs, yet many leave these systems and become homeless.

CONTEXT Young people transitioning from child welfare, juvenile justice, and behavioral health are at risk for crisis. Systems do not adequately provide access to basic needs and supportive programming needed to stabilize and thrive. Homelessness is sometimes criminalized.

NEW OPPORTUNITY Systems involvement is a clear risk. Cross-systems collaboration at the federal, jurisdictional, and local levels can create opportunity to intervene.

Prevent risk from becoming crisis in education settings

MISSED OPPORTUNITY Education is a touch point for most youth, yet schools lack data and expertise to intervene.

EXAMPLES YAs interact frequently with adults who have opportunity to observe and intervene—and don't, for example, young people leaving behavioral health and detention facilities. There is a need for screening, planning, and referral.

CONTEXT Education is a critical factor in determining YA trajectories. Schools can be better prepared to observe, identify, and refer youth and families for screening, assessment, and support.

NEW OPPORTUNITY Schools can be better equipped to address inequitable exposure to risk which turns into crises that cannot be predicted.

Prevent risk to becoming crisis with concrete supports

MISSED OPPORTUNITY Young people, especially young parents, lack basic needs and responsive social and health supports that might enable them to advance.

EXAMPLES Chronic risk, scarcity, and instability become crisis at unforeseen times. Young people, community, and helping professionals are not aware of supports and resources.

CONTEXT Young people at risk may not be aware of concrete supports (including housing) and avoid formal services because some are ageist and non-affirming. Provider shortages mean long waits for health and mental health care. Inequity magnifies risk.

NEW OPPORTUNITY Increase awareness and screening. Require and support connections across providers and access points in health, mental health, education, justice, and welfare.



PREVENTION LEVEL 2: PREVENT RISK FROM BEING CRISIS

		RECOMMENDED ACTIONS		
		POLICY	PRACTICE	RESEARCH
CROSS SYSTEMS	<p>Prioritize cross-agency engagement at the federal, state, and local levels to create comprehensive, youth-specific prevention systems.</p> <p>Require treatment facilities, hospitals, jails, and child welfare agencies to ensure they are not discharging YAs to homelessness.</p> <p>Ensure that policy precludes YAs to be cited, arrested, or charged for survival acts and quality of life offenses.</p>	<p>State programs including interagency YH prevention offices and rapid response teams to prevent homelessness after systems involvement.</p> <p>Support successful transitions by adapting and expanding promising and research-supported programs.</p> <p>Child welfare and juvenile justice exits support housing access, connections to caring adults.</p>	<p>Evaluate the effectiveness of single agency and interagency prevention efforts.</p> <p>A better understanding of protective factors that buffer YAs against homelessness in spite of risk.</p> <p>Long term studies of YA pathways into and through systems and into homelessness—and the supports that can avert it.</p>	
	EDUCATION SETTINGS	<p>Extend response to intervention (RTI) and multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) to address academic engagement, life skills, and screening.</p> <p>U.S. Department of Education and State Boards of Higher Education can support student housing stability through dorm and nutrition access.</p> <p>Create a national Youth Homelessness Prevention Council with lived experts who advise education policy and practice.</p>	<p>RTI and MTSS models can embed universal screening for housing risk and school disengagement and offer supports based on risk.</p> <p>Expand secondary and postsecondary education to prepare TAY for work and career, build resilience, and ensure awareness of supports.</p> <p>Expand school technology and improve data literacy to better enable flagging of risk and crisis.</p>	<p>Investigate outcomes besides housing that result from DCT and other housing supports.</p> <p>Rigorous evaluation of prevention, screening, and related upstream efforts.</p> <p>Repeated prevalence estimates to determine change in the number and characteristics of youth homelessness experiences.</p>
		CONCRETE SUPPORTS	<p>Coordinate with and across city, state, federal agencies to ensure that new initiatives are sufficiently funded to enable evaluation.</p> <p>Create a national council to investigate, transform, and customize the YA safety net, ensuring intergenerational lived expertise.</p> <p>Provide a supportive platform to young people who are effective messengers with critical insights to inform policy.</p>	<p>Screening tools for housing instability and homelessness exist and can be employed across these systems.</p> <p>Focus on improving outcomes among BIPOC and LGBTQ-identifying youth and young parents.</p> <p>Systematic efforts to inform personnel across youth-serving fields about concrete supports.</p>



PREVENTION LEVEL 3: PREVENTING CRISIS FROM BECOMING HOMELESSNESS

Transition-age youth (TAY) who identify as Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and LGBTQ+ face disproportionate adversity and crisis, along with individuals with family history of housing instability, limited educational attainment, family disruptions, and loss. Complicating this, TAY experience chronic and repeated adversity without knowing what events will prompt housing instability or homelessness. Gone unaddressed, undetected, or (worse) ignored, these crises compound.

Prevent crisis from becoming homelessness by providing information, resources, and support	
MISSED OPPORTUNITY	TAY experience numerous crisis points related to family, sexual and gender minority status, limited income and opportunity, and disparate experiences with criminal legal systems.
EXAMPLES	Chronic crisis combines with lack of formal and informal supports that are accessible, affirming, and culturally responsive.
CONTEXT	Crisis across systems and contexts too often goes unnoticed and youth lack positive connections they can turn to for social and concrete support.
NEW OPPORTUNITY	Reach young people experiencing adversity to provide information, resources and support that is responsive to their priorities and concerns. Involve them in design and quality management.
Prevent crisis from becoming homelessness through effective crisis management	
MISSED OPPORTUNITY	Coordinated state, federal, and local partnerships are needed to inform and evaluate prevention models and interventions and address the dearth of evidence on prevention.
EXAMPLES	Both geographic isolation and density disproportionately affect subgroups of youth; services and supports are absent or require long waiting periods.
CONTEXT	Across and within systems and jurisdictions, communication about youth characteristics and needs is rare compared to other populations.
NEW OPPORTUNITY	As prevention efforts grow, there is opportunity to focus on effective crisis management that averts homelessness.
Prevent crisis from becoming homelessness through improved communication and data integration	
MISSED OPPORTUNITY	TAY experiences in public systems are fragmented. They lead to under-identification and siloed action. This is complicated by intersectional identities such as ethno-racial and sexual and gender minority (SGM), so impending crisis is not foreseen or identified.
EXAMPLES	Cross-systems communication about youth is too rare; homelessness and prevention systems are designed largely around the needs of older adults.
CONTEXT	Health, behavioral health, and other systems fail to engage young people in developmentally sensitive, affirming ways.
NEW OPPORTUNITY	Improved data sharing and cross systems integration can improve the ability to detect and intervene earlier.





PREVENTION LEVEL 3: PREVENTING CRISIS FROM BECOMING HOMELESSNESS

				RECOMMENDED ACTIONS		
				POLICY	PRACTICE	RESEARCH
PROVIDE INFORMATION, RESOURCES, AND SUPPORT	<p>Tap youth experts and partners to define policy-relevant indicators, measures, and outcomes to monitor across time and cohorts.</p> <p>Embed youth-centric language that endorses their resources, priorities, and concerns.</p> <p>Incentivize employment, preparation, and representation of individuals with lived expertise in youth-serving systems.</p>	<p>Provide emergency financial assistance, family mediation, and domestic violence victim support.</p> <p>Public health campaigns to increase youth, provider, and family awareness of how crisis precipitates homelessness.</p> <p>Interventions focused on LGBTQ+ youth can strengthen family and peer communication, increase acceptance, and support family contact.</p>	<p>Studies of how risk operates and how promotive and protective factors can be leveraged (in systems and communities) to promote stability.</p> <p>Learn how engaging youth and social networks (when safe and appropriate) can promote positive, healthy behaviors and interactions.</p> <p>Study events that trigger crisis among TAY at risk.</p>			
	EFFECTIVE CRISIS MANAGEMENT	<p>Preventing youth homelessness demonstration programs (PYHDP) offer community- and youth-centered approaches to prevention.</p> <p>Federal disaster policies and responses can better account for the needs of youth and young adults.</p> <p>Policy differentiation of supports for 12-17-year-olds and 18-25-year-olds. Ensure that consent and privacy are not barriers to service.</p>	<p>Extend and deepen awareness of resources such as the National Runaway Safeline.</p> <p>Differentiate programs and program models to better meet the needs of various subgroups of young people.</p> <p>Develop (and test) new prevention models in partnership with young people, including students within school programs.</p>	<p>Research to understand pathways through homelessness can inform more affirming prevention and intervention models.</p> <p>Brief questionnaires among TAY in coordinated entry to determine crises that triggered housing instability, what services were used—and not.</p> <p>Evaluate prevention models using causal designs.</p>		
		IMPROVED COMMUNICATION AND DATA INTEGRATION	<p>Cross-systems data sharing with regular convenings across public agencies, policymakers, TAY, and other stakeholders.</p> <p>Work at the state and local level to improve institutional capacity to leverage data and engage external experts.</p> <p>Communicate, in evidence-based terms, the harm of legislation to curtail supports for young people from ethnoracial and SGMs.</p>	<p>Expand and study the use of intergenerational supports such as host homes.</p> <p>Use multiple avenues to strengthen screening efforts and include lived experts in development and use of screening.</p> <p>Cross train and deploy teams of community providers from different systems to become expert in resources, supports, and alternatives.</p>	<p>Develop youth-centered and youth codesigned means for longitudinal data collection on risk, resilience, crisis, and supports.</p> <p>Evaluate professional training to reduce bias and increase youth-centered supports, including eliciting their priorities and concerns.</p> <p>Pilot predictive models with cross-systems data.</p>	



PREVENTION LEVEL 4: ENSURE POSITIVE, SUSTAINABLE EXITS FROM HOMELESSNESS

Systematic and anecdotal evidence to date indicate that young people rarely achieve housing stability, especially after long waits in shelter that precede supportive housing programs. Little is known about interventions and supports that shore up and sustain young people as they exit homelessness and move into stable and supportive environments.

Create sustainable exits from homelessness through tailored solutions	
MISSED OPPORTUNITY	Current funding and systems (shelters, drop-ins, maternity group homes, housing subsidies) are not sustainable solutions and may complicate trauma.
EXAMPLES	Few shelters serve women and young people. For young people who experience homelessness, some forms of temporary shelter can be harmful and traumatic.
CONTEXT	The current set of systems and supports is largely reactive, offers few real upstream prevention possibilities, and does not ensure sustainable exits.
NEW OPPORTUNITY	Create strategies for supporting young people with chronic housing instability, including cash and housing plus models, informed by lived experts.
Create sustainable exits from homelessness through early identification	
MISSED OPPORTUNITY	Missed opportunities within coordinated entry and downstream approaches, in schools, out-of-school time, higher education, and child welfare and justice systems.
EXAMPLES OF MISSED OPPORTUNITIES	Schools and communities can provide safety, stability, and community connections to mitigate the impact among children, youth, and families experiencing homelessness
CONTEXT	On the streets, in schools, and across child welfare and justice systems, little attention is paid to the critical nature of housing as a safe base for higher-order needs.
NEW OPPORTUNITY	A unified continuum of early identification efforts across systems can support early intervention, promote stability, and enable holistic, sustainable solutions.
Create sustainable exits through implementation and evaluation of new, emerging and existing interventions	
MISSED OPPORTUNITY	Housing options and capacity are insufficient to meet need. Little is known on how to match the needs and assets of young people with different forms of support and the length of support needed to sustain exits from homelessness.
EXAMPLES OF MISSED OPPORTUNITIES	The assumption that housing in some form equates to sustainable well-being, access to quality formal and informal supports, and employment opportunities means missed opportunities.
CONTEXT	Lapses are evident across all pathways into homelessness and the response systems, including street outreach, shelters, and housing programs
NEW OPPORTUNITY	Test the effectiveness of existing, new, and emerging supports (for example, cash plus, host homes, rapid rehousing, transitional supportive housing).





PREVENTION LEVEL 4: ENSURE POSITIVE, SUSTAINABLE EXITS FROM HOMELESSNESS

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS			
	POLICY	PRACTICE	RESEARCH
TAILORED SOLUTIONS	<p>Funding for prevention demonstrations and evaluation. Ensure funding and use of Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) vouchers.</p> <p>Require/expand TAY representation and support within community, state, and federal advisory committees.</p> <p>Ensure funding opportunities for prevention; support evaluation and technical assistance.</p>	<p>Technical assistance for public agencies and human service providers on prevention and early intervention opportunities.</p> <p>Deploy supports that create connections and capital, such as, mentorship, reframing adversity as resilience, virtual meetings.</p> <p>Create private-public partnerships to enable TAY to maintain contact and build credit, such as cell providers, banking, credit agencies.</p>	<p>Engage and support lived experts to codesign research and evaluation.</p> <p>Create specific training pipelines and funding opportunities for young people to participate in and lead research.</p> <p>Investigate how messaging can reduce stigma and support investment in prevention.</p>
EARLY IDENTIFICATION	<p>Create higher education and vocation workgroup to make recommendations for supporting education and workforce preparedness within programs.</p> <p>Guide States with 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLCs; Part B of ESEA) to identify housing instability and support enrichment efforts.</p> <p>Coordinate federal and state rules and data systems for homeless services programs.</p>	<p>Inform education, early education, out-of-school time and higher education providers regarding the drivers and interventions for youth homelessness.</p> <p>Ensure adequate support for young people to transition successfully from rapid rehousing, cash plus, and other temporary housing supports.</p> <p>Individualized supports based on youth assets and needs, working to match follow-up supports on exit from homelessness.</p>	<p>Repeated estimates of homelessness and study of pathways starting by high school.</p> <p>Cost studies that examine the expense of support versus homelessness among subpopulations may provide policy-relevant evidence.</p> <p>Investigate the relationship between community- and individual-level factors to inform sustainable exits.</p>
IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION	<p>Incentivize interventions that examine long term outcomes and are tested across time.</p> <p>Explore and test financial, housing, and family service models for persons at risk of corrections reentry and homelessness.</p> <p>Create blended funding that enables housing along with health and social supports.</p>	<p>Engage public agencies to prioritize sub-populations and design supports for youth transition, ethnoracial minorities, and SGMs.</p> <p>Support cloud-based storage of personal TAY identity documents.</p> <p>Some pandemic efforts addressed homelessness without criminalization, efforts worthy of adaptation and replication.</p> <p>Conduct studies that are large enough to determine effects by subgroup and type of support.</p>	<p>Additional research is needed to understand the characteristics and trajectories of young people within and across systems.</p> <p>Little is known about the intersection of disability and homelessness among TAY.</p>

End Notes

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