

Preventing & Ending Homelessness for Justice Involved Youth in Minnesota

A transition planning tool for community-based providers working with young adults

The Challenge

From the Administration on Children, Youth and Families' Youth Services Bureau, Street Outreach Program Data Collection Project Final Report, April 2016:

- Nearly 44% of youth interviewed had stayed in a jail, prison or juvenile detention center.
- Almost 78% had at least one interaction with the police.
- Nearly 62% had been arrested.

Wilder Research in 2015 confirmed:

- 37% of all youth experiencing homelessness in Minnesota report having been held in a correction facility.
- 41% of youth experiencing homelessness in Greater Minnesota report having been held in a correctional facility.



Transition planning with justice involved youth is a significant opportunity to prevent and end youth homelessness!

We can prevent homelessness upon exit by beginning transition planning immediately when a young person arrives at a facility.

- ✓ Start early to build a positive relationship between probation officer, youth and program staff.
- ✓ Prioritize chosen family input, engagement and participation in developing transition plan, when appropriate.
- ✓ Incorporate employment and education supports into programming offered.
- ✓ Ensure young people can access services even if they relocate.

Best Practices: Dedicate Staff to Release Planning

- Offer individualized Transition Coordination by highly-trained staff.
- Incorporate a staff dedicated to developing connections, partnerships and opportunities with community organizations to create opportunities for youth to access services during and upon release.
- Consider the position of an Educational Navigator who will ensure educational needs are met upon release.
- Probation officers should work closely with facility staff to identify services and share information to be included in a robust transition plan.

Best Practices: Connecting & Accessing Housing

Contact your local HUD Continuum of Care (CoC) to discuss the housing needs of your youth and their families, and opportunities for your facility and youth to access the CoC housing resources. Learn about opportunities for your facility and youth to access CoC housing resources.

Develop a point-of-contact with in the county's housing department, local housing authority and with local HUD Continuum of Care. Consider sharing information about the types of housing needs expressed by the youth you serve via ongoing cross-trainings about the types of housing resources available in your community.

OJJDP has released "**Reentry Starts Here: A Guide for Youth in Long-Term Juvenile Corrections and Treatment Programs.**"

This is designed to help youth prepare for reentry and success.



Best Practices: Engaging Community Providers, Families and Supportive Chosen Families

Strong support from positive adults, chosen families and biological families can be critical to the success of many youth post-discharge. At times, transportation and other family demands can prevent family and supportive adults from participating in transition planning. To enable this engagement, create a range of opportunities to involve parents, caregivers and other supportive adults. Also consider partnering with community-based agencies to bring their services on-site, creating linkages to the community that follow the youth once they leave the facility.

- Offer an extensive range of opportunities for family engagement activities including: skill-building classes that parents and children attend together, sports programs, family-fun days and graduations, family visits and therapy, phone calls, and earned home release.
- Pay for family's transportation to the facility, especially if the facility is located outside the city center.
- Subcontract with mental health, mentoring and family support service agencies – schedule appointments and assist with transportation, if needed.
- Partner with a community-based organization (or utilize a trained staff member) that will coach youth and their families on self-sustainability, job readiness and employment in preparation for their transition back into the community. These services should follow the youth upon re-entry into their neighborhood so they can continue building a sense of self-sufficiency.

Minnesota Juvenile Detention Facilities Highlighted in this Quick Guide:

- Hennepin County Home School
- Hennepin County Juvenile Detention Center
- [Dakota County Juvenile Services Center](#)
- Northwestern Juvenile Center
- Prairie Lakes Youth Programs
- Ramsey County Boys Totem Town
- Ramsey County Juvenile Detention Center

Contributing Minnesota Departments:

Minnesota Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee
Minnesota Department of Corrections
Minnesota Department of Human Services
Minnesota Department of Health
Minnesota Department of Public Safety

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Quick Guide

This Quick Guide is a cross-departmental effort to concisely examine the intersection of youth homelessness and Minnesota's juvenile justice system. Corporation for Supportive Housing, Minnesota Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee, Minnesota Department of Corrections, Minnesota Department of Human Services, Minnesota Department of Health, and Minnesota Department of Public Safety interviewed staff from seven facilities across five Minnesota counties, ensuring each facility reflected unique demographics. A report based on the five primary findings from the interviews, this Quick Guide, and recommendations gathered were then developed to inform the Minnesota State Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness by 2020.

