

JAY INSLEE
Governor



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DIRECTIVE OF THE GOVERNOR
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January 24, 2017

To: Washington State Cabinet and Small-Cabinet Agencies

From: Governor Jay Inslee

Subject: Interagency Work Group on Youth Homelessness

In 2015, I signed the *Homeless Youth Prevention and Protection Act* to ensure that all young people have a safe and stable place to call home and the support they need to thrive. With this Act and the creation of the Department of Commerce's Office of Homeless Youth (OHY), we are taking steps to prevent and end youth homelessness.

Over the last year, OHY has engaged experts, stakeholders, young people experiencing homelessness, and communities across the state to learn what is needed to prevent young people from experiencing homelessness and how to respond effectively when it occurs. Through that collaboration, OHY developed a set of recommendations in its [2016 report to the Governor and Legislature](#). One theme stands out in this report: each of us plays a role in preventing and ending youth homelessness.

Youth homelessness is complex and touches many systems. While OHY oversees this effort, all of state government must be committed and coordinate to ensure that young people have a safe and stable home, support to reunify with family when appropriate, access to physical and behavioral health care, and opportunities to obtain education and employment. Importantly, we must ensure that no young person is discharged from a public system of care into homelessness.

Accordingly, I request that the state agencies and entities listed below participate in an interagency work group led and facilitated by OHY. The interagency work group will provide a forum for an integrated and consistent statewide approach to addressing youth homelessness. Working together, we will promote accountability, improve efficiency, and establish strategic collaboration across state government to address youth homelessness.

Membership shall consist of agency representatives who have the authority to make policy or to implement changes on behalf of the agencies that they represent.

The work group shall include members from OHY, Children's Administration, Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration, Office of Juvenile Justice, Economic Services Administration, Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery Services, Health Care Authority, Employment Security Department, Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, State Board of Community and Technical Colleges, Student Achievement Council, Washington State Patrol, Commission on African American Affairs, Commission on Hispanic Affairs, Commission on Indian Affairs, and Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs.

In addition, I invite the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Administrative Office of the Courts, Office of Civil Legal Aid, and Office of Public Defense to participate in this work group as well.

The interagency work group on youth homelessness shall establish shared goals, outcomes, and action plans to:

- Prevent youth from experiencing homelessness after exiting public systems of care;
- Ensure every youth has a safe and stable place to sleep at night;
- Reconcile families when safe and appropriate;
- Provide youth with opportunities to establish positive, healthy relationships with adults;
- Provide youth with opportunities to advance in their education or training and obtain employment; and
- Ensure youth have access to behavioral and physical health care.

The work group shall be convened beginning in the spring of 2017 and shall continue on an ongoing, regular basis. In 2017, the work group shall develop shared goals and begin implementing action plans that include comprehensive transition plans and a risk assessment and referral process for youth in systems of care.

Kim Justice, Executive Director of OHY, will be contacting you with further information on the convening of the work group. She can be contacted directly at kim.justice@commerce.wa.gov.

Thank you in advance for your support. Together, we can prevent and end youth homelessness.