

THE SOUTH L.A. HOMELESS TAY & FOSTER CARE YOUTH COLLABORATIVE



Workgroup Members Guidelines

June 2014

Developed by:



Community Planning 2014 Background

THE COLLABORATIVE is comprised of stakeholder workgroups that will inform and guide the priorities of the community's strategic plan. These workgroups were identified based on feedback received from the community through monthly collaborative meetings and other outreach events that began in January 2014. These workgroups will further discuss issues, identify solutions, and create action plans to guide the community's strategic plan for homeless TAY and foster care youth in South Los Angeles. Work will commence in June 2014 and should be completed no later than September 30, 2014.

The workgroups are:

Data & Research

Education

Faith-Based

Foster Care/ Child Welfare

Government

Housing

Mental Health

Public Safety

Resources & Investments

Supportive Services

Transition-Aged Youth (TAY)

Workgroup Descriptions:

Each workgroup is comprised of community partners, who are individuals and organizations committed to the creation and successful implementation of the community's strategic plan to prevent and end youth homelessness in South Los Angeles. Each group has a specific role within the plan and as such, has responsibilities towards fulfilling the goals and objectives created by the community stakeholders.

Each group will address three main topics as they work and plan together:

1. What are the most important issues, service gaps, and challenges within your topic as it relates to youth homelessness in South Los Angeles, in addition to what has already been collected and identified by the Collaborative (if applicable)?
2. What detailed solutions do you envision? Detailed should include solutions, what resources are needed, what resources can be leveraged, and who do we need to partner with to implement these solutions (a discussion guide will help your group document your solutions)?
3. What are the recommended action steps? Be specific.

Please join the group(s) in which you can contribute and offer solutions:

Data & Research: Comprised of research and advocacy organizations; any representatives who have access to and can interpret data related to homeless TAY and foster care youth; evaluation and research experts; public policy experts and others who have experience interpreting and presenting data and research. *Responsible for the collection, interpretation, maintenance and dissemination of data and information relevant to homeless TAY and foster care youth. A member from each of the other workgroups may be represented.*

Education: Comprised of educational institution leaders, experts and those experienced in navigating educational resources and services; those committed to addressing the learning gaps and challenges faced by TAY and foster care youth; homeless liaisons, teachers, and anyone interested in this topic.

Faith-based: Comprised of church pastors and faith-based leaders; faith-based community development organizations and individuals; faith-based nonprofit organizations; those who focus on the connection between faith and community; and those interested in engaging the faith-based community on homeless TAY and foster care.

Foster Care/Child Welfare: Comprised of individuals, organizations, child welfare agencies, and other community stakeholders who work with and serve foster care youth who are at risk of being homeless and/or who have become homeless.

Government: Comprised of government agencies and representatives who provide public assistance, resources, and support to homeless TAY and foster care youth. Also, includes those who have experience and are interested in the navigation of government services and resources targeting homeless TAY and foster care youth.

Housing: Comprised of agencies that provide emergency, transitional and permanent housing and shelter for TAY; includes independent shelter operators, and those who help homeless TAY and foster care youth navigate housing resources.

Mental Health: Comprised of organizations and agencies providing and/or coordinating mental health services. This group should also include individuals and organizations that navigate and access mental health services targeting homeless TAY and foster care youth.

Public Safety: Comprised of representatives from LAPD, County Sheriff, County Probation, City and County Fire Departments; other individuals and organizations involved in working with TAY and foster care youth with prior criminal or juvenile delinquency history; TAY and foster care youth who are and/or are at risk of being homeless.

Resources & Investment: Comprised of public and private organizations, leaders, and individuals interested in 1) increasing investments and leveraging resources 2) targeting housing and services 3) targeting homeless TAY and foster care youth.

Supportive Services: Comprised of agencies, organizations, and individuals who provide critical supportive services that help support, stabilize, and connect homeless TAY and foster care youth to resources they need.

Transition-Age Youth (TAY): Comprised of TAY and foster care youth ages 16-25 and former homeless TAY and foster care young adults. *This group will provide an advisory role in the ideas, discussions, and plans developed by each workgroup. This group will also formally document their needs and develop their own set of recommendations and solutions to prevent and end youth homelessness.*

Guidelines of the Process:

1. Each workgroup is responsible for reviewing this document to provide understanding.
2. Each workgroup is responsible for holding itself accountable to achieving its goals.
3. Each workgroup should have members in attendance at the scheduled workgroup sessions planned sometime during May 2014 to July 2014 and should be willing to meet additional hours outside of scheduled sessions.
4. Each workgroup will report updates at the monthly Collaborative meetings.
5. The charge of the workgroup should be understood by each member and followed by the workgroup.
6. Failure by any member to fulfill any of their roles and responsibilities **will not stop** the workgroup process, given that the work of the group is needed in a timely basis.

Role of Workgroup Members

- A. Maintain a commitment to the accomplishment of the work group's goals and objectives.
- B. Ensure a minimum of 2 hours attendance at each work group session.
 - 1) Understand and actively participate in group discussions and support group decision making processes.
 - 2) Ensure your participation is marked by: listening, openness, positive intent to get the work done, a focus on problem solving not position taking.

- 3) Avoid: personal attacks, digression from the topic at hand, side conversations during group discussions, being overbearing, rushing to a decision when the issue is not fully understood by group members.
- C. Take on responsibilities, delegated by the group leader/facilitator and accomplish them within the timeframe established by the workgroup. *Recognize that the time frame for interim steps is essential to the timely accomplishment of the effort.*

Typical Roles in Workgroups

While everyone should be responsible for brain storming, problem solving, and providing their experience and knowledge, sometimes it can be helpful to assign group member specific roles. That way, members know exactly what they are responsible for. Each group will assign roles as needed. Below are roles commonly found in groups:

Leader/Facilitator – Leads discussions ensuring everyone is fully participating and ensuring the group carries out its discussion and decision making as outlined in its workplan, regardless of attendance. Ensures that tasks are completed within the specified timeframe, and within the desired resource limits. A leader can keep the team focused, mediate conflicts, and ensure that individuals are held accountable.

Note Taker or Scribe – Maintains a written record of the work group's decisions (not necessarily minutes, but a working document in the format and language of the final product, as much as possible) and distributes this record to work group members prior to or during work group meetings.

Reporter - The Reporter reports the workgroup's work at monthly collaborative meetings or other community gatherings, when feasible.

Effectiveness of Group Members

- A. Group members' responsibilities include holding themselves accountable, participating in group activities to achieve the overall **goal**, and respecting all members of the group.
- B. Group members are not only responsible for creating positive productivity within their group, but they must also avoid falling into the trap of unproductive behaviors that also arise in group settings. **Group think** and social loafing are two incredibly common negative phenomena that arise in group collaboration.
- Groupthink is simply going along with the team on a decision because that seems to be the consensus and they want to avoid conflict. Having a strong devil's advocate will help reduce the chances of groupthink.
 - Social loafing is someone that is putting forth less effort as a member of a group than they would as an individual. They are allowing the other members of the group to do the majority of the work with the intention of still reaping equal benefits. Again, [leadership](#) and holding people accountable is a great tool to deal with social loafing.

*Working in groups can be challenging. Blending people from many different backgrounds, personalities, styles and work [ethics](#) can make consensus difficult. **However, when all group members take on their expected responsibilities, group work can become much more enjoyable and effective.***