

Bridge Support Partnership Demonstration Project

Examining the Potential of *Bridge Support Partnership* Model to Bridge the Interim Housing Gap among Foster Youth Exiting DCFS Care via a Public-Private Partnership

One in four Transition Age Youth (TAY) who age out of the Los Angeles child welfare system annually will enter homelessness within two years. Additionally, Transitional Living Setting (TLS) youth, non-minor dependents still in care with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), are in need of interim housing solutions to avoid falling into homelessness. The Bridge Support Partnership model eliminates barriers that prevent these youth from accessing the interim housing services that are fundamental to their long-term housing stability.

This demonstration project builds upon lessons learned from the emergency partnership formed in December 2021 in response to the EFC “Housing Cliff.” Over a two-year period, the project will provide 30 bridge housing beds for youth exiting DCFS care without a secure housing plan, seeking to prove the effectiveness of this innovative model at reducing homelessness among former foster youth. The project also incorporates an additional population of TLS youth, those still in care with DCFS but in need of interim housing services, which are often hard to find. With the passage of AB1979, the State of California now allows a broader definition of transitional living settings to support non-minor youth who are entering or reentering foster care or transitioning between placements. With these two populations – exiting TAY and TLS youth – receiving critical bridge housing and support services (over a period of 30 to 120 days), we can reduce youth homelessness, and with this demonstration project and evaluation, we can document that impact for ongoing replication with DCFS to permanently solve this service gap.

Key Project Objectives

- Supporting Safe Place for Youth (SPY) with the service and operating costs of interim housing (via a minimum of 30 beds) for exiting TAY and TLS youth; SPY will also provide intensive case management, housing navigation, and a range of other supportive services to participants
- Providing technical support to DCFS toward eliminating barriers within County systems (including limits on data sharing and program/benefits eligibility that have a disproportionate impact on current and former foster youth), as well as those that may preclude CBOs from establishing Bridge Support Partnerships with DCFS
- Conducting a formal program evaluation targeted to public funders and policy makers that will explore the potential of the Bridge Support Partnership model to serve as a permanent solution to providing TLS youth and/or youth exiting DCFS care access to the interim housing services that are fundamental to securing their long-term stable housing

Project funding has been secured from LA County’s Department of Children and Family Services and Department of Mental Health, along with grants from private philanthropy.

Background: The EFC Housing Cliff

In December 2021, a cohort of 20 of the 1373 TAY preparing to exit DCFS care on December 31 were unable to secure housing and as such would enter homelessness on January 1. The Center for Strategic Partnerships, working closely with the DCFS’s Supportive Housing Division (SHD), initiated and secured an emergency partnership that involved: (1) eliminating barriers that precluded use of Rapid Rehousing vouchers to support these TAY, (2) paving the path for SPY to set up new short-term TAY beds via shared housing, and (3) enabling SHD to act as liaison connecting this cohort of TAY to SPY. As a result, none of the TAY cohort exited care into homelessness.

One Roof LA convenes multiple County departments to work collectively toward systems change for improved housing stability outcomes among child welfare-involved families and TAY. With a deep focus on TAY, One Roof LA has set goals for expanding housing resources and access to housing, as well as enhancing the impact of the new DCFS Supportive Housing Division.

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