



Oregon

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Department of Human Services
Child Welfare Report to the Legislature on Runaway and Homeless Youth
Oregon Revised Statute 417.799
September 14, 2016

The Department of Human Services (DHS) is submitting this report to the Legislature as required by ORS 417.799 – Runaway and Homeless Youth, a result of House Bill 2232 enacted in the 2015 Legislative Session. This report provides a status of the system of services and supports for runaway and homeless youth developed by DHS, and information about the committee appointed to advise and provide expertise to DHS related to the needs of runaway and homeless youth in Oregon.

Program Updates

The DHS Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) program coordinator left the position in early 2016. A new coordinator (Matthew Rasmussen) started in April 2016 after a 3 month vacancy.

In April 2016, DHS participated in the semi-annual West Coast Convening, a series of day and a half sessions involving government and program staff from Oregon, Washington, and California who meet to discuss common issues around serving homeless youth. Six individuals attended from Oregon, including staff from four private RHY providers, a representative of county government and the RHY coordinator from DHS.

DHS continues to manage the Oregon Programs serving Runaway and Homeless Youth email Listserv to advertise future trainings, funding opportunities, and other information pertinent to this population.

DHS continues to be actively engaged with 211info. In September 2015, the Professional Information and Referral Specialists from 211info finalized development and launched a mobile app for youth who may be homeless or in need of basic services. The app includes resource lists and GPS enabled maps for shelter, medical care, and food. Between the launch in September, and June 2016, there were just under 10,000 total downloads. In the quarter leading

up to September 2016, 211info database and design teams have been working on updates, to include:

- Mapping and List Updates
- Zip Code and Keyword Search Updates
- Sharing Details Page Information Updates
- Customization of User Interface

Service Updates

DHS continues to engage contractually with youth-serving organizations who are funded by the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA). The following Runaway and Homeless Services are currently being provided through 25 contracts with 14 different providers:

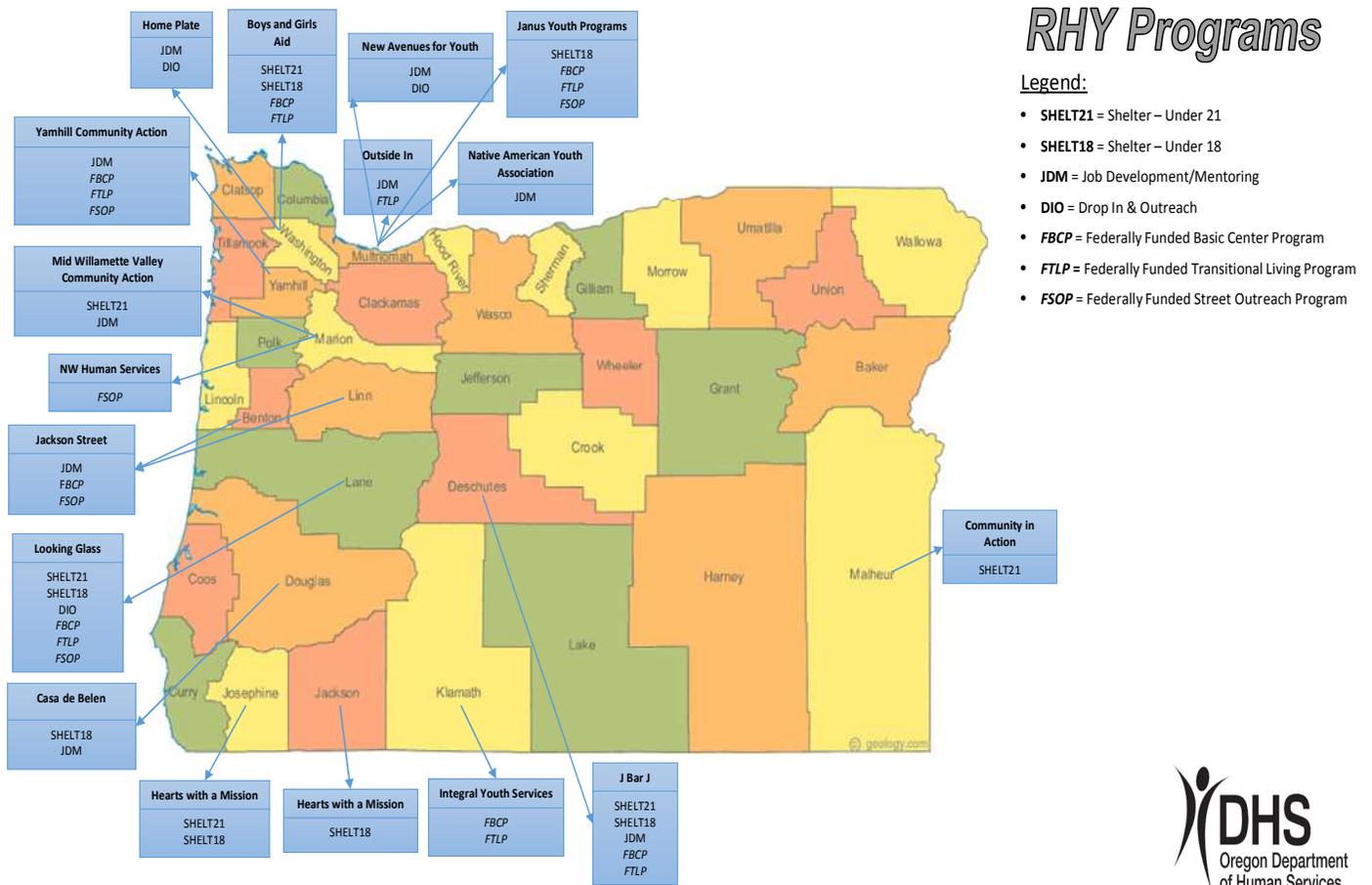
- Overnight Shelter Services (serving unaccompanied minors 18 years old and under)
- Overnight Shelter Services (serving youth and young adults up to age 21)
- Job Development / Mentoring
- Drop in Day Facility and Outreach Services (serving unaccompanied minors 18 years old and under)

Contracts for Job Development / Mentoring have been in place since February 2014. Overnight Shelter Services (serving youth and young adults up to age 21) have been in place since September 2014. These contracts were established in response to the 2013 Legislature allocating additional funding to DHS to assist in the expansion of the RHY Program. Note, HB 3244 passed in 2013 extending the Overnight Shelter Services age limit from 18 to 21 years of age.

New contracts for Drop in Day Facility and Outreach Services, as well as Overnight Shelter Services (serving unaccompanied minors 18 years old and under), began on January 1, 2016, in direct response to a 2015 Legislative allocation of an additional \$1.6 million. That amount is in addition to \$1.5 million (primarily State General Fund and Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) funds) to achieve the statewide budget of approximately \$3.1 million.

At the June 2016, Homeless Youth Advisory Committee (HYAC) meeting, a decision was made to distribute unallocated RHY funds. The unallocated funds were initially intended to be utilized for Technical Assistance. However, after further analysis, the Committee decided more planning was needed to implement appropriate Technical Assistance. Consequently, approximately \$250,000 in RHY funds was distributed to the providers that hold these contracts in an effort to expand their availability.

The following map shows where State general funded programs are located, as well as where Federally SSBG fund supported Basic Center, Transitional Living, and Street Outreach Programs exist throughout the state.



DHS Homeless Youth Advisory Committee (HYAC)

In 2015, House Bill 2232 directed DHS to “appoint an advisory committee to advise the department with respect to policies and procedures to coordinate statewide planning for delivery of services to runaway and homeless youth and their families.” Over the past year, the HYAC met three times – in October 2015, April 2016, and July 2016. The January 2016 HYAC was postponed due to the turnover of the DHS RHY coordinator.

The HYAC meetings are scheduled throughout the next year with a goal to build a strategic plan for the establishment of a sustainable statewide system for homeless children and youth. Though participation has been varied, the current membership of the Homeless Youth Advisory Committee is as follows:

Representative	System Representation
Janet Arenz	Oregon Alliance for Children’s Programs
Dona Bolt	Department of Education – Homeless Youth
Jamie Broadbent	DHS – Supervisor: Commercially Sexually Exploited Children
Caitlin Campbell	Multnomah County – Homeless Youth Continuum
Jennifer Denning	Community Colleges and Workforce Development
Laurie Price	DHS – Program Manager Child Well Being
Matt Rasmussen	DHS – RHY Program Coordinator
Kevin Lamson	Hearts with a Mission
Jean Lasater	Oregon Health Authority –Mental Health
Vicki Massey	Housing and Community Services
Jamie McKay	Oregon Youth Authority
Emily McLain	Basic Rights Oregon
Lisa Mentasana	Beaverton School District – McKinney-Vento Liaison
Karen Nibler	League of Women Voters
Karri Robinson	Oregon Youth Authority
Claire Seguin	Oregon Housing and Community Services
Anya Sekino	Youth Development Division ODE
Kate Stokes	Yamhill Community Action Agency
Vera Stoulil	Boys and Girls Aid – Oregon Alliance for Children’s Programs
Ashley Thirstrup	Native American Youth and Family Services
Daryl Turner	Portland Police Association
Jo Zimmer	Rural Oregon Continuum of Care

HYAC Meeting Agenda Highlights

- October 2015: HYAC participants provided agency updates. Information was also distributed surrounding involvement with the 211info app and Request for Proposal (RFP) status for the contracts that were to begin in January 2016.
- April 2016: A juvenile justice panel presented information and discussed how local juvenile departments and law enforcement interact with runaway and homeless youth.
- July 2016 – In July 2016, the HYAC received updates and engaged in discussion / decision making following DHS’ strategic planning progress (see below). Committee members also provided input to DHS regarding the 2015 allocation of new funds to the department.

Additionally, HYAC members have introduced documents related to structuring a statewide service continuum, which will be analyzed in upcoming workgroups and quarterly meetings.

Strategic Planning Updates

In March 2016, DHS entered into a contract with an independent consultant with topical expertise in homelessness, affordable housing, poverty and social equity to consolidate a number of reports, provide research and analysis, and to help inform policy/program development for Oregon's Runaway and Homeless Youth strategic plan.

Following an aggressive timeline from April – July 2016, DHS and the contracted consultant completed focus groups in three locations across the State - The Dalles, Roseburg, and Tualatin - in an effort to maximize input from both Oregon's rural and urban centers. Participants from as far away as La Grande and Medford provided input at the focus groups. Individual interviews were also completed with those who could not attend the focus groups. Twenty total youth and young adults were involved in the focus groups or individual interviews.

The participants represented a wide cross-section of youth and young adults involved in state services:

- Youth/Young Adults in detention facilities
- Youth/Young Adults involved with Child Welfare
- Unaccompanied Youth residing with friends
- Unaccompanied Youth residing with friends in shelters
- Unaccompanied Youth residing in host homes

Focus group attendees presented information and data points that provided a big picture understanding of issues across the State. Notably, key gaps in services and policies were identified and related the needs of runaway and homeless youth in Oregon.

Information gathered from the focus groups and interviews was combined with a synthesis of existing Oregon and nationwide data and research on homeless youth to create "*Oregon's Runaway and Homeless Youth: An Overview and Strategic Framework*" (attached). This comprehensive document highlights the causes and characteristics of youth homelessness, and best practices for services and interventions to address this growing issue. Topics include:

- Causes, characteristics, needs, geographic distribution, and numbers of homeless youth in Oregon
- Impacts of youth homelessness
- Best practices for services and systems to address youth homelessness
- Gaps in Oregon's homeless youth services and systems

- Addressing youth homelessness in Oregon including:
 - State System needs
 - Resource needs
 - Policy and System Changes
 - Data and Information needs

The document was ratified by the Homeless Youth Advisory Committee at the quarterly meeting held on July 29, 2016, and a “Call to Action” cover letter was added. As a result, subsequent workgroups were created surrounding two priorities,

- System Components, Alignment and Supports
- State-level Framework and Resources

These workgroups will begin their work September 2016 to identify next steps, draft policy recommendations, and further construct action plans.

Additional information may be provided upon request;

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