

DCYF Integrated Strategic & Racial Equity Plan: Create Successful Transitions to Adulthood Webinar Q&A

Q: What is the 6560 report?

A: Senate Bill (SB) 6560 addresses the need to ensure no youth is discharged from a public system (Child Welfare or Juvenile Rehabilitation) into homelessness. View the [SB 6560 Report](#).

Q: What is being done to create a coordinated way for DCYF to collaborate with adult-supported living systems? There is a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and established practice with the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA), but this needs ongoing work. We don't seem to have anything with the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) Home & Community Services for youth who don't qualify for DDA, but have cognitive impairments that will make it very hard for them to find and keep housing on their own. The same with youth who have chronic mental health issues that will require lifelong support and which will limit their ability to find and keep employment and housing.

A: Particularly in the context of designing systems around youth who are going to have the hardest time with the transition, we are trying to engage earlier in the transition conversations so we can build bridges more fluidly and have softer handoffs among systems. We create lots of small transitions along the way, but we have a lot of work to do in this area. I see our coordination with tribal support in attending, per tribal leader request, the Tribal Leader Social Service Council, as a way for us to de-silo our agency. We struggle finding services for our youth over 18. The service delivery system is set up for 18 and under and adults. We are very excited that Jess and their team are going to clear the path for us as we start to reintroduce ourselves in DCYF.

Q: As we are all aware, there is a significant lack of long-term, stable placements, and housing options for adolescent foster youth and young adults that exacerbate trauma and crisis circumstances already suffered because of child abuse and neglect. I have a dream of a solution in the way of a new, local, independent, and transitional living (IL/TL) community housing program that offers behavioral health services and other supportive resources (e.g., education, life-skills, therapeutic intervention, diversity education, future-planning, etc.) for Washington State foster youth. Do you know if any of the recent allocated government funding will be earmarked to address the lack of long-term adolescent placements as a viable opportunity when considering options to alleviate this disparity?

A: We have been having a lot of these conversations. We look at where we place kids, the implication of our services. We have someone whose primary job is to find the holes in placement services and figure out how we can build bridges to fix those holes. We are mapping the service array. The Office of Homeless Youth is a fabulous partner in this work. We have this



influx of funding we are trying to use for youth and housing. We have not been successful in securing because of a case manager requirement. We are looking into case management, so we can utilize this for our youth. Where we can actually address those either through our policy or leaning on others to see how we can bridge services. Youth housing has been chronically underfunded forever. We need the state and the federal government to invest in the space, so we actually have places to put kids, particularly in that younger age range.

Q: Has DCYF Juvenile Rehabilitation (JR) been discussing how the recent expansion of Pell Grants to incarcerated students could be accessed by JR emerging adults?

A: Yes, access to this expansion of Pell Grant is a game changer for many young adult students.

Q: Is there disaggregated data for Multiracial-identified youth?

A: We do not have disaggregated for the data reported here, but the Office of Innovation, Alignment and Accountability (OIAA) is moving to standardize our race/ethnic reporting so that we disaggregate American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) Multiracial and Black/African-American Multiracial and Hispanic Multiracial. This will make the existing Multiracial category much smaller. Because changes in our data collection system are needed, this is work we're undertaking during calendar year 2021 across the agency data systems.

Q: Is there a connection with the Housing Stability for Youth in Courts (H-SYNC) work being done by Co-Lab and UW Medicine Behavioral Health? Meaning a connection with the JR programs you are discussing and the prevention of homelessness with the work done through H-SYNC (which is being developed by CO-Lab/UW Psychiatry and Behavioral Health).

A: JR or Adolescent Programs will need to follow up.

Q: Will you be partnering with adult services in order to focus on family reunification? What about family reunification with incarcerated parents or parents recently released from incarceration?

A: DCYF divisions, including Adolescent Programs continue to partner with other agencies and are working together to make the transition between programs as seamless as possible.

Discussion Questions

1. **How do you envision DCYF partnering across programs and with community to achieve these goals?**
 - a. Collaboration and communication are key in both areas – not sure how the process would appear, but those two areas I feel are very important.
 - b. It's imperative that youth have long-term input from at least one stable and loving individual who is willing to invest time in his/her/their life. I am curious whether you are linking arms with programs that provide Certified Peer

Counselors able to create long-term, lasting support. It takes an investment and establishing trust to keep a youth from defaulting the bad wiring they have received from inadequate parenting. It is not always racism. It is bad parenting and generational damages that need to be ferreted out and addressed.

- c. A lot of youth are in cross-systems. What I heard today was mostly presentation from JR. I imagine there is an overlap with DCYF for that population. Maybe just getting DCYF to partner with their own programs would be a good start.
- d. For an effort to be community-driven, we must create additional opportunities for communities to offer input and commit support for those solutions. Given the opportunity, many communities want to own the problem and support solutions for their families.
- e. Futher, how great would it be to link arms with programs that help adults parent... so a kiddo who is getting help is able to watch his parents get help, and they can grow as a family unit.
- f. Also having an Adolescent Program Manager in every region whose only role is to address the needs of youth. Region 2 has one that is fantastic.

2. How should community-driven approaches that center Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) experiences look?

- a. Caseworkers can definitely help youth look through brochures or online tours of places to help youth consider where to apply. Tours or a staff member who can work with youth who want to know more would be helpful. So many of these kids struggle with wanting so desperately to have control over their choices but aren't ready to read or sign rental agreements due to being so overwhelmed.
- b. We should have opportunities for ongoing internal work. RESJ should be a larger division. We put a lot on a few people. As amazing as they are, this work requires more resources for their work – OUR work. Also, staff should be given the opportunity to stand up this work – on top of that being the work they should be doing as a person – by supporting both by ongoing work on awareness and having BIPOC folks in supervisory and project work.
- c. Agree re: The need to have a dedicated Program Manager in every region who is focused on adolescent issues and services, including services available while in care + transition planning and housing issues.
- d. Agreed as to regional Adolescent PM, and dedicated adolescent social workers.

3. What else do you want us to know?

Comments

Hoping to connect young people to outdoor work on NW Permaculture Projects.

More information on Reentry Team Meetings:

https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pubs/JR_0024.pdf

More information about the Independent Living Program:

<https://dcyf.wa.gov/services/independent-living-skills/independent-living-program>

More about Culturally Appropriate Mentorship:

<https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/news/boeing-awards-grant-mentor-washington-native-american-youth>

Creating those invitations and many choices early on could include these outdoor opportunities on NW Permaculture Projects. The relationships they build with people who are focusing on the sustainability of soil and life are the ones that could help them ground themselves.