



Ending Youth Homelessness in Polk County

Des Moines, Iowa – April 17, 2017 - The Youth Policy Institute of Iowa (YP II) is pleased to join [Iowa Homeless Youth Centers](#) (IHYC) and the [Polk County Continuum of Care Board](#) in a collaborative project to develop a comprehensive plan to end youth homelessness in Polk County. The [Mid-Iowa Health Foundation](#) recently awarded a \$50,000 HealthConnect Innovation grant to Iowa Homeless Youth Centers to make the project possible.

IHYC will subcontract with the Youth Policy Institute to lead the planning process. “We are excited about the opportunity to work with IHYC and the Continuum of Care Board to build consensus on a plan of action to both prevent homelessness and address the needs of those who become homeless,” said Andrea Dencklau, Youth Policy Institute Project Manager, who will manage the process.

Of particular interest to YP II is the chance to address the unacceptably high rate of homelessness among young people who age-out of foster care. “State data and national research shows that one in four young adults who age out of foster care become homeless by their early twenties.” continued Dencklau. “One of our goals is to focus specific attention on ways to improve housing plans and stability for young people who are transitioning from the system, so that no youth exits foster care to homelessness.”

Over the next several months, YP II will be convening partners, analyzing data, researching best practices, identifying strategies, and drafting the community plan. The project will kick-off with a stakeholder meeting later this month, with the plan completed by the end of the year.

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[About Youth Policy Institute of Iowa](#)

Founded in 2000, the Youth Policy Institute of Iowa (YP II) works to expand and improve the delivery of services and supports for Iowa youth by partnering with public and private entities throughout the state. YP II is involved in a wide range of initiatives, but specializes in policies and programs affecting youth transitioning from adolescence to adulthood, particularly those who have been involved in child welfare (foster care) or juvenile justice systems. YP II also provides coordination, outreach, and evaluation support to the [Iowa Aftercare Services Network](#).