Ending Youth Homelessness in Polk County

Des Moines, Iowa – September 10, 2019 – Two years of collaborative work facilitated by the Youth Policy Institute of Iowa has paid off in the form of a $1.865 million grant to the City of Des Moines to help prevent and end youth homelessness.

Des Moines is one of 23 communities across the country to be awarded a 2019 Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program grant by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Incorporating perspectives of young people and involving a diverse coalition of stakeholders in the development of a plan to End Youth Homelessness in Polk County, were keys to the success of the local proposal.

“We are fortunate to have multiple community organizations and public agencies representing housing, child welfare and juvenile justice systems that are willing to work together with young people to reduce youth homelessness in Polk County,” says Andrea Dencklau, Youth Policy Institute of Iowa Senior Policy Associate. “We are excited to continue working with these partners to utilize this grant and realize the goals set forth in the plan.”

In 2017, private and public organizations in Des Moines worked together with young people to develop a blueprint to end youth homelessness in Polk County. With early investment from the Mid-Iowa Health Foundation, and in partnership with the Iowa Homeless Youth Center and the Polk County Continuum of Care, the Youth Policy Institute of Iowa facilitated the development of this community plan and continues to work with stakeholders on implementation.

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About Youth Policy Institute of Iowa

Founded in 2000, the Youth Policy Institute of Iowa (YPII) works to expand and improve the delivery of services and supports for Iowa youth by partnering with public and private entities throughout the state. YPII 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.

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