

# Homeless Youth and Young Adult Summit

## 2012 Priorities

### ❖ Housing

- Several things for council members to know:
  - Wait lists for housing programs take too long (6 months up to 2-3 years) leaving individuals to wait in situations where their main focus is survival.
  - Housing provides important stability and fulfills a basic need allowing youth to function in society
  - Some transitional housing programs require residents to follow guidelines that make it difficult for some youth to succeed. Diverse options and youth specific flexibility on guidelines would help all youth to find employment or continue their education.
  - It is hard to find housing for couples and families with children, forcing some families to split up.
  - There is not enough housing in King County. More housing will reduce the number of people who access shelters and increase their contribution to society
- What council members can do about this:
  - Fund more rental assistance programs to help youth and young adults keep their housing
  - Support individual living programs (reference YMCA programs)
  - Expand the variety of housing options to fit more needs of the community, such as accommodating couples and families (including expectant parents)
  - Increase funding for current housing programs

### ❖ Transportation

- Several things for council members to know:
  - Transportation options are essential for finding employment
  - The cost of \$2.25 per bus ticket is too expensive for homeless and low-income youth to afford
  - Without affordable transportation, homeless and displaced youth have less access to healthy food (through food banks and free meal programs), service centers where youth meet basic needs (such as showers, laundry, case management, and counseling), and healthcare services (decreasing youth's ability to make appointments and leading to higher health care costs in the long run)
- What council members can do about this:
  - Allocate funding for expanded transportation options, including but not limited to:
    - Subsidized Orca cards and bus tickets for low-income riders
    - Funding for programs providing free bikes, skate boards, and scooters
    - Taxi vouchers
    - Vehicles for service providers
  - Keep and expand the Ride Free Area. (If this is not possible, invest resources in a mitigation plan that provides adequate free bus service in the downtown core)

## ❖ Employment

- Several things for council members to know:
  - Employment gets youth off the streets and youth supportive programming employment opportunities help make this possible
  - Young adults need job skills, basic life skills, and ability to maintain hygiene to secure employment.
  - Some employment internships for homeless youth in King County offer 16-18 hours a week, while others can only offer 10-12hrs/wk. Part time employment (10-15 hours a week) is not enough for homeless youth and young adults to support themselves
  - Working is a right – youth need to be able to secure jobs and establish careers just like everyone else
- What council members can do about this:
  - Sustain and expand current paid internships and job skills programs for homeless youth – however increase hours per week (>15hrs/wk) and lengths of programs (8-12 wks).
  - Support programs that:
    - Assist youth in transitions between and after internships
    - Collaborate with businesses to guarantee internships to homeless youth
    - Prepare youth for both short term and long term employment

## ❖ Shelter

- Several things for council members to know:
  - There is not enough shelter for homeless youth and young adults in Seattle and King County – shelters need more space, more beds, and more staff so that they can serve more youth. For examples, one existing shelter has 15 youth and 1 overnight staff member – they would be able to expand with more funding for overnight supervisors.
  - Age limits (some shelters allow young adults up to 23, others up to 26) are not flexible which forces young adults to transition to adult shelters when they don't feel comfortable.
  - Homeless youth and young adults need access to day shelters with computers, basic services, and places to sleep
- What council members can do about this:
  - Increase funding for existing overnight shelters to allow for:
    - More beds
    - More permanent paid staff manning overnight youth shelters (including night case managers)
    - More employment opportunities for shelter youth (shelters offer paid leadership positions for homeless youth which help youth develop job skills)
    - More flexible and diverse young adult (29 and under) shelters that accommodate couples and families with children and people with service animals
    - Storage facilities
  - Support flexible day hours at shelters or programs where youth and young adults can get their basic needs met