Written Public Comments

Three written public comments were received (attached). All three comments advocated providing services to the city’s homeless population, in particular to youth, people with mental disabilities, and people who have been incarcerated.

Two of the commenters advocated for a strategy to provide services to out-of-school youth ages 16-24, enhancing the YouthSource system to provide these services and providing funding opportunities for providers of service to homeless youth.

Online Survey

There were seventeen responses to the online survey. Two thirds of the respondents either work at the City of Los Angeles, a WorkSource Center, a YouthSource Center, or a partner agency. Two respondents were job seekers, one an employer, an education and homeless advocate, and a youth services provider.

When asked to rank the most important WorkSource Center services, focusing services on assisting long-term unemployed find employment, helping homeless individuals secure employment, and training laid-off workers for new employment and career options were the highest rated.
I am Marsha Temple, Executive Director of the Integrated Recovery Network. Thank you for this opportunity to speak with you about the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

Now that the economy has improved, many of the people who can work are working. As I understand WIOA, the Department of Labor is now asking you to think very seriously about the people who are not working, those with the most severe barriers to employment: people with mental disabilities, people who have been homeless and people who have been incarcerated.

In 2013, according to LAHSA’s count, there were 29,682 homeless people in the City of Los Angeles, an increase of 26% from the previous count in 2011. Of those people, 56% were working age folks, between 24 and 56 years old. Most of the homeless people were African American men. 29% of the homeless people in Los Angeles were mentally ill. 25% were counted within City Council District Nine, which encompasses Skid Row.

If you know how it works on Skid Row, you know that routinely, mentally ill people are arrested and taken to Twin Towers, that part of County Jail where mentally ill men are kept. They may stay for only a brief time or longer. When they are released, they go back to Skid Row without follow up care. The cycle soon repeats itself. That’s why we call the connection between Skid Row and Twin Towers the revolving door. Typically a person on Skid Row who has a mental disability has been arrested many times.

So today in the City of Los Angeles, there are probably at least 8,500 homeless people with mental disabilities who have been incarcerated.

You might be wondering if there isn’t an easier population to work with.

Over the years, it has been my honor to work with this population and see 177 of these folks get jobs. Our agency has learned that it is fairly easy to get someone a job, but it can take us a lot of hard work to help someone become ready to be employed.

I would ask you not to be afraid of that hard work. I would also suggest that the best places to help these people stabilize might not be a WorkSource center. It might be a homeless service provider that offers housing with wrap-around services: case management, psychotherapy, treatment for addiction, and employment services.

Just because something is difficult, does not mean it is impossible. The cost of doing
nothing is not free. The homelessness problem is costing the City of Los Angeles $100 million a year. Most of that expense goes to the LAPD to arrest homeless people. Wouldn’t it be better to get them housing, healthcare and a job?

Thank you.

Marsha Temple, Executive Director
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May 18, 2015

Mr. Charles Woo, Chair  
City of Los Angeles Workforce Investment Board  
Economic & Workforce Development Department  
1200 W 7th Street,  
Los Angeles CA 90017

Re: WIB Board Draft Plan

Dear Mr. Woo,

The Hollywood Homeless Youth Partnership (HHYP), an alliance of 6 agencies providing services to homeless youth in Hollywood, writes to comment on the Annual Draft Plan with regard to recent changes to the Workforce Investment and Opportunities Act (WIOA). The HHYP member agencies include Children’s Hospital Los Angeles, Covenant House California, Los Angeles LGBT Center, Los Angeles Youth Network, My Friend’s Place, and Step Up on Second.

We recognize the great work the WIB has done to assist young people with completing their high school education and preparing them for post-secondary education as well as seeking employment through the YouthSource Centers. We have reviewed the plan and ask that the board re-evaluate the plan’s suggestions around meeting the needs of youth experiencing homelessness with regard to two specific areas: (1) the definition of out-of-school youth and (2) the fact that the plan does not specifically mention the intent to provide services to youth at risk or experiencing homelessness.

1. The definition of out-of-school youth has been expanded to include individuals ages 16 to 24, who have dropped out of school and those who face extensive barriers to work, which includes homelessness. The existing YouthSource system is designed to meet the needs of youth 14 to 21 and relies heavily on the collaboration with LAUSD. In light of the expanded definition, there is no mention in the plan on how the current system will reach and serve older youth, 21 to 24, many of whom have no connection or opportunities with LAUSD.

2. Youth experiencing homelessness face unique challenges that affect their stability and participation in services. We find that the plan overly emphasizes returning to school and does not strike a balance with meeting the employment needs of homeless youth. Specifically, there is no mention of any services or interventions that will be provided to the homeless youth population. Youth
experiencing homelessness need a range of services that are often best served by embedding services within agencies already serving this population. The YouthSource System has little experience meeting the needs of this population. There is no mention in the plan on how this population will be reached and served and no mention of the services and interventions that will be provided.

While we agree that obtaining an education is important, in our HHYP “No Way Home” report (2010), we found that youth experiencing homelessness “struggled to achieve their education goals when they also had to deal with more immediate housing and employment issues. As a result, not all youth saw education as the priority.”

We respectfully ask the WIB Board to:
- Specifically outline services and interventions to be made available for older, ages 16 – 24, out-of-school youth, and those who are experiencing homelessness;
- Enhance the YouthSource Centers to provide these services; and
- Provide more meaningful grant opportunities to service providers who work directly with homeless youth to address their specific needs with regard to education and employment, health, mental health services, life skills, and housing.

We look forward to partnering with you to ensure the needs of youth experiencing homelessness in the City of Los Angeles are met.

Sincerely,

Arlene Schneir, MPH
Co-Chair, Hollywood Homeless Youth Partnership
Associate Director, Division of Adolescent and Young Adult Medicine, Children’s Hospital Los Angeles

Heather Carmichael, LCSW
Co-Chair, Hollywood Homeless Youth Partnership
Executive Director, My Friend’s Place

CC: Jan Perry, General Manager, Economic & Workforce Development Department,
Gregory Irish, Executive Director, City of Los Angeles Workforce Investment Board, Economic & Workforce Development Department
May 15th, 2015

City of Los Angeles Workforce Investment Board
Economic & Workforce Development Department
1200 W 7th Street,
Los Angeles CA 90017

Attention: Mr. Charles Woo, Chair

Subject: EWDD Planning Department - Year 16 WIB Annual Plan

Dear Mr. Woo,

We at the Los Angeles LGBT Center recognize the great work the WIB has done to assist young people with completing high school education and preparing them for post-secondary education as well as seeking employment through the YouthSource Centers. We value our existing collaborations with the Workforce Investment Board and the YouthSource centers in providing opportunities for our most disadvantaged youth.

We have reviewed the Annual Plan in particular as it relates to changes needed to respond to the Workforce Investment and Opportunities Act (WIOA).

Through our discussions with The United States Interagency Council of Homelessness (USICH) and our federal partners at HHS, HUD and DoJ, it is clear that their intent is for the WIOA to target services to populations with the highest barriers to employment. This includes youth who are older and, out-of-school, and those who face extensive barriers to employment. We would respectfully suggest that the draft plan does not adequately embrace the intent of the Act to serve those most in need of services. We refer to two specific areas:

1. The definition of out-of-school youth has been expanded to include individuals ages 16 to 24, who have dropped out of school and those who face extensive barriers to work, which includes homelessness. The existing YouthSource system is designed to meet the needs of youth 14 to 21 and relies heavily on the collaboration with LAUSD. There is no mention in the plan on how the current system will reach and serve older youth, 21 to 24, many of whom have no connection or opportunities with LAUSD.

2. While the Annual Plan does mention the intent to provide services to youth at risk of or experiencing homelessness, there is no mention of any services or interventions that will be provided to this population. On any given day or night there are an estimated 6,000 homeless youth in Los Angeles, up to 40% of
whom identify as LGBTQ. This population includes youth who have exited out of foster care, are staying with friends or living in a transitional living program or other housing program. Many are ready and willing to enter the workplace and need the services and support provided under WIOA to achieve this.

At the same time older youth, LGBTQ youth and youth experiencing homelessness need a range of services that are more accessible and different from those currently available in the existing YouthSource System. The Los Angeles LGBT Center, as well as other youth serving agencies, provide services to assist these youth in overcoming the challenges they face in achieving self-sufficiency. Several agencies, including ourselves, provide employment services to these youth and use interventions, such as Individual Placement and Support, which work well with this population. There is no mention in the plan on how this population will be reached and served and no mention of the services and interventions that will be provided.

We would ask that the annual plan address these questions:

1. What services and interventions will be made available for:
   A) older, ages 16 – 24, out-of-school youth:
   B) LGBTQ youth, and
   C) Youth who are at-risk of or experiencing homelessness?

2. How will the YouthSource system be retooled to provide these services?

3. How will providers, who have a proven record in providing services to this population, be provided a meaningful opportunity to compete for funding to provide these services?

The Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority is now releasing the results of the recent homeless count. Los Angeles has the largest population of youth experiencing homelessness in the country. I would ask the Youth Council and the WIB to not only meet the minimum requirements of the WIOA but to embrace the intention of the WIOA and show the City and even the country that these resources can be used to make a purposeful and meaningful change in the lives of youth experiencing the highest barriers to employment.

Sincerely,

Curt Shepard, Ph.D.
Director of Children, Youth & Family Services

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CC: Jan Perry, General Manager, Economic & Workforce Development Department, Gregory Irish, Executive Director, City of Los Angeles Workforce Investment Board, Economic & Workforce Development Department