

1 in 5

Transgender individuals either need housing or is at risk of losing housing.¹



Homeless transgender youth **are particularly vulnerable to marginalization, exclusion, and discrimination by systems** that are supposed to help them.²

Needs and Goals

- Gender expression and identity self-efficacy
- Legal support for name and gender marker changes
- Gender-affirming health care services
- Specialized education, employment, and job training programs that help combat stigma, exclusion, and discrimination
- Help creating permanent social connections

Program Supports That Can Help Meet These Goals

- Assessment tools and training that help workers identify and address youths' goals
- Alignment with service providers—particularly transgender-specific organizations—to meet educational, employment, legal, and health care needs
- Concrete supports for physical appearance, such as help with hygiene, hair, and even a clothes closet—ideally provided by a transgender person
- Peer networks, mentoring opportunities, and empowerment groups
- Assistance navigating systems for medical help, financial support, legal assistance, transportation, and employment services

References

1. Minter, S. & Daley, C. (2003). *Trans realities: A legal needs assessment of San Francisco's transgender communities*. San Francisco, CA: National Center for Lesbian Rights.
2. Ray, N. & Berger, C. (2007). *Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth: An epidemic of homelessness*. The National LGBTQ Task Force.

From *3/40 Blueprint: Creating the Blueprint to Reduce LGBTQ Youth Homelessness* | www.340blueprintproject.com

In a Youth's Own Words



No one is going to get cut up or shot, you know, here. But out on the street, it can possibly happen.



Sometimes the TLPs are safe if you trust the staff, and sometimes they can be just as dangerous as couch surfing.



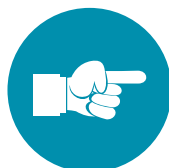
We get all the stares... we get, like, harassed sometimes. I do, at least. That's when I feel unsafe.



Emotional Safety



Confidentiality



Feeling at ease



People with shared identities



Validation of identities



Freedom to express each identity



Inclusive and affirming language

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68%

LGBTQ homeless youth identify family rejection as a factor in why they became homeless.¹



54%

LGBTQ homeless youth identify abuse in their family as one factor in why they became homeless.¹

If TGE youth do not feel safe, it is extremely difficult for them to complete developmental tasks such as finishing school, sustaining healthy relationships, developing support networks, and finding employment.²

Bias, rejection, and stigma at the individual and system levels lead to youth feeling their safety is at risk,³ and create an atmosphere where spaces do not feel very affirming for those who are transgender.⁴

First Steps for Transitional Living Programs

1

Honor and respect all aspects of a youth's identities, including race, ethnicity, gender identity, ability, culture, and religion.

2

Use youths' preferred names and gender pronouns, and avoid cisnormative language.

3

Bring in staff members who share identities similar to the youth who are receiving services.

4

Assess and align tools and training to support staff in addressing transgender and gender expansive youths' needs.

5

Ensure practices, policies, and accountability measures are in place to ensure youths' physical and emotional safety.

6

Strive for a calm, secure environment and regular routines.

7

Respect youths' needs for privacy, alone time, and personal space.

References

1. Price, C., Wheeler, C., Shelton, J., & Maury, M. (Eds.). (2016). *At the intersections: A collaborative report on LGBTQ youth homelessness*. True Colors Fund and the National LGBTQ Task Force.
2. Ryan, C., Russell, S.T., Huebner, D., Diaz, R., & Sanchez, J. (2010). Family acceptance in adolescence and the health of LGBT young adults. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Nursing*, 23, 205-213.
3. Ecker, J. (2016). *Queer, young, and homeless: A review of the literature*. *Child & Youth Services*, 1-37.
4. Choi, S. K., Wilson, B. D., Shelton, J., & Gates, G. J. (2015). *Serving our youth 2015: The needs and experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth experiencing homelessness*. Los Angeles: The Williams Institute with the True Colors Fund.

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In a Youth's Own Words



“Sometimes there’s multiple people applying for the same job—but they take you to places that are very accepting, no matter what.”

“We get our hormones there, they help us switch our insurances over, everything.”

“She helped me fill out my financial aid...and she helped me fill out scholarships.”

“Having lawyers (for my) name and gender change definitely helped me feel more confident as a woman.”

In addition to providing housing, Transitional Living Programs (TLPs) can be a lifeline for TGE youth by providing access to:

- General medical care and gender-affirming medical interventions such as hormone blockers, hormones, and surgeries
- Health care professionals skilled in working with diverse identities
- Legal services for name and gender marker changes
- Legal documents with preferred name and gender, to aid employment and education
- Transgender-specific employment services, especially where workforce discrimination is allowed
- Other transgender-specific organizations and empowerment groups

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How to ask youth about Gender Expression and Gender Identity

- Build trust by treating youth as equals.
- Recognize intake is already a stressful, emotional situation.
- Use the youth's preferred name and gender pronouns, and allow the flexibility for them to change.
- Do not conflate sexual orientation with gender identity.
- Understand youth who are just starting to transition might feel insecure and not want to disclose their sex assigned at birth.
- Ask only basic questions that will help guide placement decisions.
- Let youth know how the information will be used.



REMEMBER

Some transgender youth can feel anxious about moving through the shelter system according to the sex or gender written on their birth certificate as opposed to their gender identity.¹

Reference

1. Boyle, T. J. (2009). *The experiences of homeless lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth and the meanings attached to these experiences*. New York, NY: Wurzweiler School of Social Work, Yeshiva University.

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