



## **BCCEYH Proposal for Urgent Action**

TO LAUNCH A PROVINCE-WIDE CAMPAIGN TO ENSURE YOUTHS AGING OUT OF CARE DO NOT END UP HOMELESS ON SEPTEMBER 30<sup>TH</sup> 2020

During COVID-19, emergency measures have been in place by MCFD to 'pause' the aging-out process for youth in care across BC. This allows youth to remain in their current placement. Transition planning has been challenging, with youth in some cases receiving short notice that these emergency measures have been extended until September 30<sup>th</sup>.

As a result of this 'pause', Coalition members are anticipating a significantly larger cohort of youth aging out across BC at the end of the September. The actual numbers of youth are not yet known. We are proposing a campaign to drive urgent action over the next month to raise awareness of the situation and put plans in place for all youths coming to the end of their time in care. This is an emergency and a real opportunity to make sure these youth do not fall through the cracks and risk ending up homeless.

The campaign will aim to match as many youth as possible with appropriate housing options for the end of September. Where these options cannot be found, we will work with the Province to request an extension of care for youths aging out.

## CAMPAIGN GOALS:

- To make sure that each youth coming out of care in BC at the end of September will have an appropriate housing option available.
- To raise awareness that during this COVID pandemic it is essential that we do not increase the numbers of youth ending up homeless.

## ACTIONS REQUIRED:

### **1. Quantify how many youths will be aging out of care on September 30<sup>th</sup>.**

- Reach out to MCFD to request the exact numbers of youth who will be coming out of care in communities across the Province, after the 'pause' of 6 months. Request further information on the status of transition planning and the number of youths who do not have any housing plan in place.
- Build information from the bottom up by asking youth-serving agencies to identify any youth they know who will be out of housing at the end of September.
- Reach out to youth in care directly through social media and other networks so they may self-identify.

### **2. Raise awareness of the looming deadline to ensure action.**

- Send a letter to the Premier from the Coalition requesting urgent support from the Province to ensure that youth aging out of care will not end up homeless during a pandemic.
- Create a social media campaign to get the message out around the urgency for action to prevent an overwhelming increase in youth homelessness during the pandemic.
- Reach out to mainstream media (province-wide: CBC – perhaps Angela Sterritt, Vancouver Sun, Global and local media outlets) to explain the situation. Offer interviews with Coalition members, and with individual youth who turned 19 and are currently 'paused' and living with uncertainty – getting real people and stories to put a face to the urgency of the situation.
- Use all our networks to get the word out around the need for urgent action.

### **3. Partner with housing providers to identify priority housing options for youth.**

- The Coalition will identify existing housing supports such as units, subsidies, etc. that are available on October 1<sup>st</sup> in their community that can be contributed to youth aging out. For example, one organization may dedicate 3 rental subsidies and a supportive housing unit that they already have available for October 1<sup>st</sup>. The objective is to create an inventory of housing supports that this cohort can receive priority access to meet their needs.
- Collaborate with BC Housing & other bodies to request their urgent support in lining up housing units from the social housing sector for October 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Reach out to youth-serving organizations & the BC Non-Profit Housing Association to identify other housing options for youth.